

The Balanced Life
Lesson One: The Hub—Christ as the Center
Memory Verse: John 15:5

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The first six lessons of this book are related to one another. They are based on the Navigator's Wheel Illustration found in the APPENDIX. Be sure you are familiar with the Wheel Illustration. For the sake of continuity, refer to it throughout these six lessons that are associated with it.

The goal of the six lessons is to impress upon the student that the Christian life must be balanced. While doing the lessons based on the wheel, it is important to bear in mind that each component part is essential to the whole. If any one element is neglected, the whole life will suffer.

The goal of this first lesson is that as the hub of a wheel must be "centered" or else the wheel will be out of balance, so Christ must be the "Center" of life for a disciple, or else his life will be out of balance. Jesus does not present Himself to be added to our lives. He must be the "Center" of our lives.

Living the Christian life is impossible in your own strength. This lesson speaks about how we are to successfully live the Christian life.

1. Read John 15:1-9. In this passage Jesus speaks of *abiding* in Him. To abide means "to permanently remain constant." What does it mean to "abide in Christ?"

a) What are the benefits of abiding in Christ according to this passage?

b) What happens if we *do not* abide in Christ?

2. Galatians 2:20 What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?

a) When did that happen? What does that mean in a practical sense?

b) How are we to "live by faith?"

3. Galatians 5:16 Why *walk* in the Spirit? Why not *crawl* or *run*?

a) Why is "walking in the spirit" the key to not "fulfilling the lusts of the flesh?"

4. Revelation 2:1-7 What did the Ephesians forget? How can a Christian do this?

a) What must you do to *keep* this from happening, or to *reverse* it if it has happened? (v.5)

5. Revelation 3:15-20 What error did the Laodiceans make concerning themselves and their relationship with Christ?

a) In what ways might you make that same error?

b) What is the solution? (v.19-20)

Connect To Life:

If you feel you have lost your first Love, what do you need to do to begin abiding in Christ so that you may return to your first Love? Try to be conscious this week about remaining centered on Christ as opposed to operating in your own inadequate strength or on God's blessings. Make it a point to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit in your life this week. Be prepared to share the results next week.

The Balanced Life
Lesson Two: Spoke #1—Prayer
Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

This is the second of six lessons based on the Navigator's Wheel Illustration found in the APPENDIX. Be sure you are familiar with the Wheel Illustration. Refresh your mind by looking at it again.

The goal of the six lessons is to impress upon the student that the Christian life must be a balance of several key component parts.

This lesson is based on the prayers of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus' various prayers serve as excellent examples of prayer for us to follow. Throughout the lesson, the emphasis is on the idea, "*If Jesus needed to pray in these situations, how much more do we need to pray.*"

1. Note how the first spoke in the Wheel Illustration, *Prayer*, goes up. What do you suppose is the significance of this position?

- a) Consider the importance of the spokes of the wheel. What would happen to a four spoked wheel if any one spoke was damaged or missing?

Jesus is God, yet while here on earth, He understood the need for prayer. What can you learn about prayer from the example set for us by our Lord in His prayers found in the book of Luke?

2. Luke 3:21-23 What do you see happening as Christ prayed?

- a) How might your experience in prayer be similar?

3. Luke 5:16 When was He praying?

a) Who was He with?

b) How often was it?

4. Luke 6:12-13 How long did Jesus pray?

a) What did prayer precede?

5. Luke 9:18 After prayer, Jesus asked the disciples who they thought He was. Jesus was, in effect, *witnessing* to them. Why should prayer precede this activity in our lives as well?

6. Luke 9:28-29 Who was He with?

a) What happened as He prayed?

7. Luke 11:1 What happened to His disciples as a result of His prayer life?

a) What opportunity with His disciples did Jesus seize?

8. Luke 11:2-4 Outline the model prayer. What is the significance of the component parts?

a) In what ways can you pray the same?

12. Luke 23:46 What was happening when Jesus prayed?

a) What was the goal of the prayer?

b) In what ways can you pray the same?
(Realize that for the Christian, death is both a physical and a spiritual issue.)

9. Luke 22:31-32 For whom did Jesus pray?

13. If Jesus, being God, sensed the need to pray as He did, how much more do you need to pray?

a) What application can you make?

10. Luke 22:41-45. Make note of the following items in Jesus' prayer and how you may experience the same: a) who He was with; b) His physical position; c) content of prayer; d) for whose benefit was He praying; e) His attitude.

14. Not only did Jesus spend much time in prayer while on earth, what does Hebrews 7:25 say He is doing now? What might this suggest about your prayer life?

11. Luke 23:34 What did He pray for, and for whom?

Connect To Life:

As you pray, make it a point to incorporate at least two things you learned from this lesson in your prayers during your quiet time. Be prepared to share your experiences next week.

The Balanced Life
Lesson Three: Spoke #2—The Word
Memory Verse: Isaiah 40:8

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

This is the third of six lessons based on the Navigator's Wheel Illustration found in the APPENDIX.

The goal of the six lessons is to stress the importance of balance in the Christian life.

This lesson about the Word of God will challenge students to understand:

- 1) What *God* says about His Word.
- 2) What the *Word of God* says about God's Word.
- 3) What *God's people* have said about God's Word.
- 4) What God's Word will *do* in the life of a believer.

1. Note that while the first spoke (*Prayer*) goes up, the second spoke (*The Word*) goes down. What do you suppose is the significance of this position?

- a) As you consider the importance of all four spokes to the wheel as a whole, how important is the Word of God to your prayer life according to Proverbs 28:9?

In this lesson you will look at how God views His Word; what God's Word has to say about itself; and how God's people have viewed God's Word. Then you will learn what you can expect if you will adopt those same attitudes toward God's Word.

2. How does God view His *name* in Philippians 2:9-11?

- a) How does God view His *Word*? Psalm 138:2 (Look particularly at the New King James translation.)

- b) Putting these two facts together, how should you view God's Word?

3. What does scripture say about itself in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (List several things.)

- a) What implications does this have in your life?

4. Read Nehemiah 8:1-12.

Important Historical Background: The Israelites had been exiled from their homeland by God for over seventy years because they had neglected the Word of God. Most who returned were from a generation born in Babylonian exile. Many were unfamiliar with the scriptures, and didn't understand Hebrew, the language the scriptures were written in. What they heard was the Law. And yet note their attentiveness, reverence, patience, emotional response and eagerness to obey.

- a) List your observations concerning how God's people viewed the Word.

- b) In what ways can you have a similar view of God's Word? What might you do to cultivate this kind of view?

5. Psalm 119 extols the greatness and usefulness of the Word of God. Note what the following verses say about what will happen in the life of one who is a diligent student of the Word of God.

- a) Psalm 119:9 What does the Word do for you when you sin? How does it do this?

- b) Psalm 119:11 What does the Word of God do to help you avoid sin? How does it do this? What must you do to make this a reality?

- e) What responsibility do givers have concerning who handles the tithes and offerings? (v.3)

 - f) What challenges to *your* current financial commitments to the body of Christ does this passage present to you?
4. Consider what 1 Timothy 5:17-20 has to say about your relationship to the *leadership* of your local church.
- a) In what ways can you demonstrate the attitude toward leaders commanded in verse 17?

 - b) What additional responsibility do the people have for their leaders according to verse 18? Why?

 - c) What should you do if someone begins to involve you in gossip about the leadership of your church? (v.19)

 - d) If leaders “are sinning” (meaning: continuing in sin without repentance), what must be done according to v.20? Why? (For more on *how* this is to be done see Matthew 18:15-17.)
5. Read Hebrews 10:24-25.
- a) What does it mean to consider? What has this to do with fellowship?

- b) What is the goal always to be when dealing with fellow believers?
6. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.
- a) That being true, why should Christians be closely associated with the church?

 - b) In what ways can you be closely associated with the church?
7. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. List several purposes of the church. Discuss how we can do these things on a practical level in the church today.
8. On what aspects of Christian life will those who do not participate in a local church miss out? (Some aspects of the Christian life are *only* experienced in the church. What are they?)
9. What kind of commitments do you need to make concerning fellowship? (Attendance, membership, service, giving, prayer, etc.)

Connect To Life:

Choose two of the areas mentioned in this lesson in which you need to make some changes in your commitment to the Body of Christ. Decide on what practical steps you need to take this week. Be prepared to discuss your experiences next week.

If you are not a *member* of the church, get a “Membership Information Packet” from the church office.

The Balanced Life
Lesson Five: Spoke #4—Evangelism
Memory Verse: Acts 1:8

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

This is the fifth of six lessons based on the Navigator's Wheel Illustration found in the APPENDIX. Be sure you are familiar with the Wheel Illustration. The goal of the six lessons is to impress upon the student that the Christian life must be balanced.

This lesson, in conjunction with the previous lesson, is based on the fact there are only two kinds of people: believers and non-believers. There are therefore only two kinds of relationships. With believers we have *fellowship*. With non-believers we seek to *evangelize*.

This lesson will emphasize:

- 1) The importance of understanding how and for what purpose we are to relate to non-believers.
- 2) The importance of seeking to lead our non-believing family and friends to Christ.
- 3) Using our testimony and telling what we know without worrying about what we do not know about the Lord.

Christians are often afraid of evangelism. This is in part due to the fact that the world equates sharing our faith with "*cramming our religion down people's throats*." We are not seeking to cram anything down anyone's throat, but neither should we adopt a "zipped-lip" attitude that disobeys Christ's command to go make disciples and ignores the fact that without Christ, *people really do go to hell for eternity!*

Over time, Christians often have fewer and fewer relationships with non-believers. While this is quite natural, as disciples, we must maintain relationships with non-believers.

The number one goal in all our relationships with non-believers must be to lead them to faith in Christ. While this is our *first* priority, it is not the *only* priority. Friendships are important. While it is true that we should love our friends so much that we want to lead them to Christ, we do not want our friends to think we *only* care about them in order to convert them. Friends are not *prospects*. They are our *friends*.

We need to maintain friendships with non-Christians, and we want to see them saved. However, as we will see from the scriptures, having a non-Christian as a best friend and confidant is not advisable. As Christians, we have much to offer our non-Christian friends in the way of godly influence, wisdom and counsel. However, as Christians, we are not to go to non-believing friends for wisdom and personal counsel about spiritual matters.

Sharing our faith in Christ should be a natural experience. It should not be a forced or contrived presentation. Remember, friends and family are friends and family. They are not sales prospects. Therefore, sharing our relationship with Christ should be as natural as talking about any other important relationship in our lives. If friends or

loved ones react negatively, it is either because: a) they are not interested in what we are interested in, and are therefore not very good friends, or, b) we have treated them as prospects instead of as friends.

In this lesson we will consider what relationships with non-believers should and should not be, and some important tips on how to share our relationship with Christ with those we care about.

1. Why does Psalm 1:1 warn us not to go to people who are not godly for counsel?
 - a) What does this say about having a non-believer as your best friend and closest confidant?
 - b) What does it say about paying a non-Christian counselor or therapist to give you personal counsel?
2. Read Matthew 28:19-20. As you go about your business in life, what are you to be doing?
3. What does Luke 14:15-24 say about the following aspects of evangelism?
 - a) How will many respond? (vv.18-20)
 - b) How easily will the Master give up? (vv.21-24)
 - c) How driven must we be? (vv.21, 23)
 - d) What should motivate us?

4. By what power and authority are you to share Christ according to Acts 1:8?
 - a) Where were the disciples to begin, and where were they to go from there? How does that instruct you?

5. How important are you in God's plan to save the lost? Romans 10:13-14

6. Read 2 Timothy 4:2-5.
 - a) When are you to be ready to share Christ? (v.2) Why?

 - b) How will many respond to the gospel? (v.3-4) How should that fact affect your dedication to share Christ?

 - c) No matter what your primary ministry is, what must you do to fulfill your ministry? (v.5) Why?

7. Read 1 John 1:1-4. What are you to tell others about Christ according to verse 3? What about the things you *don't* know?

8. Read John 9:24-30.
 - a) What did the man know about Jesus? (v.25)

- b) What did he tell?

 - c) What instruction does that give to you?

 - d) What did the man say at the end of verse 27 that we often forget to say? Why is saying something like this so important? What happens if you fail to say something like this?
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9. As important as your testimony is, people do not get saved because of it. Romans 1:16 declares that the gospel "*is the power of God unto salvation.*" What is the gospel? How do you move from your testimony into an explanation of the gospel?

 10. It is easier to hang around Christians and worship God than it is to testify for Christ. What did Jesus command concerning your testimony in Mark 5:18-20? (Who to tell and what to tell them.)

Connect To Life:

On one side of one piece of paper, write out your testimony. Be sure to include the gospel. Avoid using "Christianese" terms. Ask two people who are not believers to read "your assignment," and give you their reaction. Be prepared to discuss your experience next week.

The Balanced Life
Lesson Six: One Wheel—Four Spokes & The Rim
Memory Verse: Luke 6:46

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

This is the sixth of six lessons based on the Navigator's Wheel Illustration found in the APPENDIX. Be sure you are familiar with the Wheel Illustration. For the sake of continuity, refer to it during this lesson. The goal of the six lessons is to impress upon the student that the Christian life must be balanced.

This lesson will address the wheel as a whole and the rim as a component part. The rim is "where the rubber meets the road" so to speak. The rim speaks of obediently putting to practice the lessons learned from the rest of the wheel.

This lesson will emphasize:

- 1) The importance of balance in the Christian life.
- 2) The importance of obedience to Christ rather than religious exercises.

ONE WHEEL—FOUR SPOKES

1. What happens to a four-spoked wheel if even one spoke breaks?

- a) Rate yourself, from strongest to weakest: Prayer; The Word; Fellowship; Evangelism. What steps do you intend to take to insure balance?

THE RIM—THE OBEDIENT CHRISTIAN IN ACTION

Obedience Must Be Complete

2. Read 1 Samuel 15.
 - a) What did God *command* Saul to do? (v.3)
 - b) What *did* Saul do? (vv.8-9)
 - c) When confronted about his disobedience, what did Saul do *first*? (v.20) *Then* what did he do? (vv. 20-21, also v.15)

- d) Explain verse 22.

- e) Incomplete obedience is disobedience. What did Samuel liken it to (v.23) and what does that tell you about how serious it is to God?

God's Timing for Obedience

3. What is God's *timetable* for obedience? See Psalm 119:59-60 Why is this important on a practical level?

Two Kinds of Obedience

4. We usually think of disobedience in terms of what we have done that we were not supposed to do. What kind of disobedience are we warned about in James 4:17?

- a) Why is this kind of disobedience more common in the Christian life?

Obedience and Assurance

5. How is obedience associated with assurance of salvation? Why? 1 John 2:3-6

Obedience and Prayer

6. Read 1 John 3:22. What part does obedience play in receiving answers to prayer? Why?

Having a Heart for Obedience

7. Is obedience a burdensome thing for a true Christian? Why? 1 John 5:2-3

- a) Does that mean obedience is easy? How can obedience be both “not burdensome” and yet not easy either?

Three Keys To Obedient Living

8. What is Solomon’s counsel concerning “the whole duty of man?” Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

- a) How is fear associated with obedience? If you are lacking in obedience, you are lacking in fear. What can you do to increase your fear of God, and therefore your obedience?

9. How is loving Jesus Christ associated with obedience? Why? John 14:15, 21-24

- a) If you are lacking in obedience, you are lacking in love. What can you do to increase your love for God, and therefore your obedience? (Cross reference 1 John 4:19.)

10. Hebrews 11:6 declares “*Without faith it is impossible to please God...*” What does faith have to do with obedience?

- a) How does a lack of faith result in disobedience?

- b) How does disobedience displease God?

11. Name the three keys to obedience found in questions 8-10. Do you need to give attention to any one or more of these three?

Connect To Life:

In what areas of your life have you been content with partial obedience? What are you going to do about it this week? Share your experience next week.

The Balanced Life
Lesson Seven: Dealing With Temptation
Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The last two lessons go together. They address two sides of the same issue: sin. This lesson deals with staying out of sin, while the next lesson deals with what to do when you have fallen into sin.

The goal of this lesson is to equip students with understanding of how we are tempted and how to have victory over temptation.

The Christian life is not free from troubles or temptations. In this lesson you will learn how to deal with temptation, which is the first line of defense against sin.

1. Read Genesis 3:1-6.

a) Name at least two of the serpent's (Satan's) methods of tempting Eve. How does he do the same with you?

b) Name at least three mistakes Eve made that we often make as well. How can you avoid these mistakes?

2. Read Matthew 4:1-11 & Luke 4:1-13.

a) Satan tried to tempt Jesus in similar ways that he tempted Eve. What are they?

b) Eve failed to resist temptation. Jesus succeeded. What did He do that she didn't? What can you learn from His example?

c) Jesus quoted scripture in resisting temptation. How can memorizing scripture help you in times of temptation? Why? (See John 14:26.)

3. Look at 1 John 2:15-17. What are the three aspects of the world that tempt us?

a) Can you see any parallels with how Satan used these with Eve and with Jesus? What are they?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. How much temptation will God allow you to experience?

a) What does God promise will accompany temptation?

5. According to Jesus in Matthew 5:29-30, what is the first line of defense against sin?

a) How did Eve fail at this point? (1) What counsel would you give her? (2) How do *you* fail at this point? (3) What counsel would you give *yourself*?

6. How are we to know what to avoid according to 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22?

a) Against what *standard* are we to test all things?

7. Read James 1:13-16. Where does temptation come from?

a) Explain the *sequence of events* concerning temptation and sin outlined in this passage.

b) What is the *result* of yielding to temptation?

c) On the basis of *this* passage, what is the first line of defense against temptation?

Connect To Life:

In what areas are you frequently tempted to sin? What can you do to avoid placing yourself in the path of that temptation? Make a special effort to do that this week. Commit to memory a passage of scripture that will help you in time of temptation. Be prepared to share your experiences next week.

The Balanced Life
Lesson Eight: Dealing With Sin
Memory Verse: 1 John 1:8-9

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The previous lesson was intended to instruct students regarding avoiding sin. Properly applied, though the principles contained in that lesson will not make any of us *sinless*, they will enable us to sin less.

As long as we are in these mortal bodies we will fall into sin. When this happens, sometimes we despair. At other times we callously disregard our sin. The goal of this lesson is to encourage students regarding God's provision for sin, which is forgiveness, and the means through which we experience it, confession and repentance.

While the first line of defense against sin is to *avoid* temptation, and the next is to *resist* temptation, the fact is, there will be times when you succumb to temptation and sin will prevail.

When this happens, it is imperative that you know what to do, and that you do it *quickly*.

1. Read 1 John 1:8. Why would anyone claim to be sinless?

2. Because you are not sinless, what must you do when you do sin? 1 John 1:9

a) Confession actually means "to agree." Therefore, to confess sin to God means to agree with God about your sin. Before you can agree with God you must know what He thinks about your sin. What does He think about your sin?

b) Most people think confession is simply admitting guilt. Explain how one can admit guilt and not really be confessing sin.

3. Read Isaiah 55:7. What actions are you commanded to take?

a) How can you do this in a practical way? Be specific.

4. What does Proverbs 28:13 say that clarifies an all-important, but often forgotten aspect of confession?

a) Why would you think it is important to confess your sin *quickly*, without delay?

b) What benefit is there in confessing your sins to God in a more *specific* rather than in a *general* manner?

5. James 5:16 calls Christians to confess their sins to one another. Why do you suppose he says this? What benefits might result from confessing your sins to another person?

6. While confession to another person is biblical and beneficial, it has been said that, "*The circle of confession should not be greater than the circle of sin.*" The following statements add to this idea. Explain the wisdom in each. Give examples.

a) *It is not generally advisable to confess sin to those who are otherwise unaffected by that sin.*

b) *Never confess "other people's" sins in a prayer meeting.*

c) *Be wise about the one to whom you confess sin.*

d) *Be discreet about details of sin when confessing publicly or to another person.*

7. Look again at 1 John 1:8-9. Answer the following questions:

a) Although we would not verbally claim to be sinless, how do we often say we have no sin by our actions *or lack thereof*?

b) Besides forgiveness, what does verse 9 promise God will do when you confess your sins? What does that mean? On a practical level, how is this beneficial?

8. What assurances of forgiveness do the following verses give you? What do these verses mean to you?

a) 1 John 1:9-2:2

b) Romans 8:1

c) Romans 8:31-39

9. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Realizing how much God has forgiven you and will continue to forgive you, how should you deal with those who wrong you?

Connect To Life:

As you pray this week, make it a point to make confession of sin a regular part of your prayer time. Be specific when naming your sins to the Lord. Ask God to give you a heart of true sorrow for your sin, so that you would hate sin as God hates sin, and be truly repentant.

The Balanced Life

ANSWER KEY / DISCUSSION GUIDE

Lesson One

1. To abide in Christ means to live, but the word is stronger than live. It means to “*remain permanently*” in Him. This means sticking close and never leaving.
1. a) Those who abide in Christ:
 - (1) Bear much fruit. (Several verses.) The fruit of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23.
 - (2) Pray, asking what they desire of God. (v.7) By abiding, they have their desires transformed to match God’s desires.
 - (3) Have their prayers answered. (v.7) c.f. 1 John 5:14-15. Praying according to God’s will guarantees answers. Abiding in Him results in a desire for His will to be done.
 - (4) God will be glorified. (v.8)
 - (5) Demonstrate that they are truly disciples. (v.8)
1. b) Those who *DO NOT* abide in Christ:
 - (1) Do not bear much fruit. (Several verses.)
 - (2) Are cast out, wither, are gathered together, thrown into the fire. (v.6) (There is some disagreement about whether this means damnation of one who only *seemed* to be a Christian, or chastening of those who are unfruitful believers. Either way, branches do not fare well in fire!)
 - (3) Do not pray or have their prayers answered. (By inference in v.7)
 - (4) Do not glorify God. (By inference in v.8)
 - (5) Do not demonstrate that they are truly disciples. (By inference in v.8)
2. When He died on the cross, every condemned sinner who believes in Christ, died with Him.

Cross reference Romans 6:1-11 for more on how the believer has been associated with Christ’s death, and resurrection, and therefore is to live accordingly by faith. (Note baptism in Romans 6 is not *water* baptism.)
2. a) When He died on the cross 2,000 years ago, every condemned sinner who has believed, or ever will believe in Christ died with Him. In a practical sense this means: a) it has already taken place, b) those who are saved will never be forced to pay for their sins, since Jesus already did (if God required a second payment, He would be unjust), and c) believers do not need to live by the dictates of the sinful flesh, since that old man was crucified with Christ.
2. b) We must believe that the old sinful man died with Christ (Romans 6:1-10). Believing that, we must refuse to obey the lusts and dictates of the old man any longer, or as the Bible puts it, “*Reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin*” (Romans 6:11-14).

When temptation comes, we must refuse to give in, believing that the sinful old man was crucified with Christ and that being dead, he has no more jurisdiction over us.

What does this have to do with Jesus being the center? Victory in the Christian life is dependent upon His finished work on the cross and our abiding in Him by faith.

3. *Walking* carries the following connotations:
 - (1) Forward progress, growth.
 - (2) Walk, *not crawl*. Not pathetically slow, but consistently making progress.
 - (3) Walk, *not run*. Not necessarily fast, but consistently making progress.
 - (4) Walking doesn’t take special training or expertise under normal conditions.

The flesh and the Spirit are opposed to each other, pulling us in two opposite directions. When we walk in the Spirit, we are *NOT* going in the direction of the flesh.
3. a) Concentrating on *NOT* fulfilling the lusts of the flesh is still focusing on the lusts of the flesh.

Some people place all their attention on not doing *bad* things. Even if they are successful, they still may not be accomplishing anything *good*. If a person does the right thing (walking in the Spirit), he will not be doing the wrong thing (fulfilling the lusts of the flesh). If a person simply refrains from doing the *wrong* thing (fulfilling the lusts of the flesh), he may still not be doing the *right* thing (walking in the Spirit).
4. They *forgot their first love* — Jesus. This happens in one of two ways.
 - (1) Some slip back into the world, forgetting how Jesus delivered them from worldliness.
 - (2) Others become engrossed in ministry and religious activity forgetting the simplicity of simply *loving* Jesus.
4. a) To keep from forgetting your first love:
 - (1) *REMEMBER* where you were and where you were headed when Jesus saved you. *Remember* what it was like when you were newly saved, and freshly in love with the Lord and His Word.
 - (2) *REPENT*, meaning turn away from whatever caused you to forget your love for Jesus.
 - (3) *REPEAT* the things you did when you first loved Christ.
5. Two things:
 - (1) They were neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. (v.15-16)
 - (2) They thought they had arrived, having no further need of growth. (v.17)

Consider: “Why would the Lord want them either hot or cold? Does God want us to be cold toward Him?” At least when a person is cold and knows it, he is not deceived into thinking he is spiritually healthy.
5. a) Two possibilities:
 - (1) Whenever I think I have arrived, I am preparing to fall. I can tell this is happening when I see faults in others, but not in myself.

- (2) Whenever I think I am comfortable with God's blessings, but do not long for more of God Himself, I am going to drift into the Laodicean error.
5. b) In v.18, Jesus says "buy from Me." He is not talking about physically purchasing anything—He is saying that what they needed can only be obtained from HIM! Jesus must remain the center of our lives.
- v.19 Receive His rebuke and chastening as a token of His love. Be teachable!
- v.19 Be zealous. No one can stir up true zeal but we can pray for it and do the things that will encourage its growth and continuance.
- v.20 Note that this verse, often used regarding evangelism, is not about Jesus petitioning non-believers for a place in their hearts. It shows Jesus outside of His own church seeking entrance. What a sad sight to see a church that not only does not have Jesus as the center, but completely outside! Note that Jesus desires to be inside, enjoying intimacy with His people. He wants to be the center!
- Note the similarity and differences between the Ephesians and Laodiceans.
- Similarly*, Christ was not the center for either.
- Differently*, the Ephesians went off in the direction of *heartless formalism*, relying on *Christian activity* rather than on Christ; while the Laodiceans turned aside in the direction of *self-assured liberalism*, relying on *God's blessings* rather than on *God Himself*.

Lesson Two

1. Prayer is a means by which we reach up to the Lord.
 1. a) Two things:
 - (1) The wheel would be seriously damaged and would likely break.
 - (2) The wheel would be out of balance.
 In either case, the wheel would not be safe or effective. Every one of the four spokes in the Navigator's Wheel is vitally important.
2. Luke 3:21-23 As Jesus prayed:
 - (1) The heavens opened (symbolic of access to God and the out-pouring of God's blessing). (v.22)
 - (2) The Holy Spirit came upon Him. (v.22) No prayer? No power!
 - (3) The Father was pleased. (v.22) Those who are not praying are not pleasing the Father.
 - (4) Jesus' ministry began. (v.23) No prayer life? No ministry.
2. a) As I am fervent in prayer, I can expect the power of the Holy Spirit to be upon me and my ministry.
3. Luke 5:16 This time of prayer occurred during a period of ministry. (v.15 & 17) We must sustain our prayer life if our ministry is to be sustained.
3. a) Jesus was in the wilderness, presumably alone. We need to spend time alone, apart from distractions.

3. b) Jesus did this often. It was a regular part of His life. Prayer must be consistent.
4. Luke 6:12-13 Jesus prayed all night. This was prolonged, intense prayer.
4. a) He prayed like this before selecting the twelve disciples. Special times of prolonged, intense prayer are necessary before making major decisions. Want direction for decisions? *Get a prayer life!*
5. Luke 9:18
 - (1) We must pray for opportunities to share our faith. Pray also for wisdom and boldness to grasp the opportunities the Lord provides.
 - (2) We must pray that people we are witnessing to will be ready and able to receive the truth about Christ. Want effectiveness in evangelism? *Pray!* Try the "Three Open Prayer" (1) *Open a door of opportunity.* (2) *Open their hearts* to receive the gospel. (3) *Open my mouth* to speak the gospel!
6. Luke 9:28-29 Jesus was with His "inner circle" of Peter, James and John. Pray with those you are studying with, or teaching— especially the ones we are closest to.
3. a) As He prayed, Jesus was miraculously changed. While we cannot expect to have Elijah and Moses join us, or that we will "glisten," we can expect God to make miraculous spiritual changes in our lives when we pray. Want change in your life? *Pray!*
7. Luke 11:1 When Jesus' disciples saw Him pray, they wanted Him to teach them to pray like He did. We should seek to maintain a prayer life that is exemplary for the sake of those we are teaching or seeking to influence. This does not mean to pray showy prayers. It simply encourages us to have exemplary prayer lives.
7. a) Jesus seized the opportunity to teach on prayer. Prayer makes us aware of opportunities to minister. Want your students to have prayer lives? *Get one for yourself!*
8. Luke 11:2-4

Our Father, Who art in heaven: Address prayer to God the Father. It is not wrong to pray to Jesus or the Holy Spirit, but the biblical example is to pray to the Father.

Hallowed be Your name: Worship and adore God for who He is; in this case, He is Holy.

Your kingdom come: Pray for the Lord's return to establish His kingdom.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven: Pray that God's will would be done on earth, just as it is done in heaven. Praying that God's will would be done is especially wise when His will is not clearly revealed concerning a given subject. Jesus did this in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41).

Give us this day our daily bread: Pray for God's provision for your *needs* — not your *wants*. *Today's needs not tomorrow's.*

Forgive us our sins: Confession of sin.

As we forgive those who are indebted to us: Pray for a forgiving spirit toward others. This is a reminder that we are to be forgiving as we have been forgiven.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

Pray that God would keep you away from temptations and to strengthen you that you might not give in to them when you do encounter them.

This prayer is a sample, giving us instruction about the kinds of things for which we ought to pray. It is okay to recite it, though it does not seem that Jesus intended for it to be a recited prayer.

9. Luke 22:31-32 Jesus prayed for Peter, knowing that Satan was “sifting” Peter and that Peter was going to deny Him.
9. a) We need to pray for people who are under spiritual attack, and for those who are weak and vulnerable. Pray for victory. Consider that Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is continually praying for His disciples!
NOTE: We sometimes judge people who are in sin, but Jesus was compassionate and He prayed.
10. Luke 22:41-45
 - a) Who He was with: Jesus was with His disciples, and He was alone. The passage encourages both.
 - b) His physical position: Jesus knelt. Kneeling helps us remember to be humble before God. While kneeling is not necessary, humility is.
 - c) The content of His prayer: He prayed for deliverance from a difficult situation, though He wanted the Father’s will more than His own desires. Pray “others-centered” prayers, asking for God’s will, not your own if the two are not the same.
 - d) Whose benefit He was praying for: Jesus prayed for the glory of God and Jesus prayed for the benefit of those who would be saved, though it meant He would suffer. Pray for what glorifies God and benefits others, not necessarily what is most comfortable and convenient for yourself.
 - e) His attitude: He was in agony yet He prayed humbly and earnestly. Pray fervently.
11. Luke 23:34 Jesus prayed for God to forgive the people who nailed Him to the cross. This is the supreme example of selfless compassionate prayer. (Cross reference Stephen’s prayer in Acts 7:60.)
11. a) Pray for those who wrong you. No matter what anyone may do to you, Jesus was wronged more!
NOTE: This prayer demonstrates Jesus’ understanding that, “we do not wrestle with flesh and blood,” but that the battle is spiritual.
12. Luke 23:46 While dying, Jesus was offering Himself up to the Father in prayer.
12. a) That God’s will be done.
12. b) We can pray in a similar manner in two ways:

- (1) If death is imminent, commit yourself to prayer, asking God to receive you to Himself on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done for you on the cross.
- (2) Spiritually, Christians are always supposed to be dying to the flesh and self. Pray always to die to self, saying “no” to the things of the flesh and “yes” to the Lord’s will in your life.

13. MUCH more!

14. He is praying for His people all the time! If Jesus prayed, and still prays, I had better be praying as well!

Lesson Three

1. Prayer is primarily man’s communication “up” to God. The Bible is God’s communication “down” to man. Note also that they are connected at the hub, which is Christ.
 1. a) If I am not in the Word, my prayers are an abomination to God.
Consider: Why? Two reasons: First, because the Word instructs me how to pray as God wants me to pray. Unbiblical prayers are usually self-centered rather than God-centered.
Second, answers to prayer often come from meditating on God’s Word. If I am not in God’s Word, I will miss these answers.
 2. The name of Jesus is higher than any other name.
 2. a) God places His Word equal to, or above His name. Since His name is above every name, His Word is above the highest name of all.
 2. b) We need to have great respect and reverence for the Word of God.
 3. Twelve observations:
 - (1) Scripture is *HOLY*. (v.15)
 - (2) Scripture makes one *WISE*. (v.15)
 - (3) Scripture reveals *SALVATION*. (v.15)
 - (4) Scripture is *GIVEN* — it is a gift from God. (v.16)
 - (5) Scripture is *INSPIRED* by God [God-breathed]. (v.16)
Note: That the Bible is *inspired* (the very words God breathed), they must be *inerrant* since there is no error in God. If the Bible is *inerrant*, it is therefore absolutely *authoritative* for all matters of faith and life.
 - (6) Scripture is *PROFITABLE* —it will be good for those who have it. (v.16)
 - (7) Scripture reveals *DOCTRINE* —“strong authoritative teaching.” (v.16) (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2-4)
 - (8) Scripture *REPROVES* —it shows me where I am in error. (v.16)
 - (9) Scripture *CORRECTS* —it shows me the right path and how to get back on it. (v.16)
 - (10) Scripture *INSTRUCTS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS* —it “disciplines” me to be righteous. (v.16)

- (11) Scripture makes *COMPLETE* —the word complete means mature. (v.17)
- (12) Scripture *EQUIPS* us for service. (v.17)
3. a) If I submit my life to the authority of God's Word, I can expect these things to take place.
4. Nehemiah 8:1-12
4. a) Nine Observations:
- (1) All who were old enough to understand were assembled to hear the Word read — including young people. (v.2)
 - (2) The people listened for six hours! (v.3)
 - (3) The people remained attentive. (v.3)
 - (4) The person who read was standing above the people. The Bible was in a place of respect. (v.5)
 - (5) The people stood out of respect when the Bible was read. (v.5)
 - (6) The people affirmed the truth of the Word of God by saying "Amen!" and lifting their hands and bowing their faces in worship. (v.6)
 - (7) The scribes explained what was being read — expositional preaching. (v.7-8)
 - (8) The people wept when they heard the Law—a sign of conviction. (v.9)
 - (9) The people responded to the Word by rejoicing and doing acts of charity. (v.10-12)
4. b) We need to cultivate more attentiveness, respect and proper response to God's Word like those in Nehemiah's day.
- We can do this by praying, confessing sins of disinterest, lack of respect and response. We can take notes and remind ourselves, "We are hearing the Word of Almighty God!" We must put shoe leather to our prayers by doing the kinds of things these people did, trusting that as we pray and do the right things, God will also give us hearts for God's Word.
5. Psalm 119
5. a) The Word cleanses us as we encounter God's reproof and subsequent grace. The Word does this as it reproves and corrects us, leading us to obedience in faith.
5. b) When the Word of God is in our hearts (memorized) it serves to remind us to steer clear of compromising circumstances. It convicts and strengthens us to say "no" to temptation. For this to happen, we must hide God's Word in our hearts through the discipline of scripture memorization.
5. c) The Word of God comforts us in times of affliction by reminding us of God's sovereignty over all situations and of His loving care for us in all situations.
5. d) We have fellowship with others who revere God's Word because we hold a high opinion of God's Word in common.
5. e) Those who are in the Word are a blessing to those around them because they have godly counsel and

words of encouragement to share. Those who are submitting themselves to God's Word speak God's Word, not gossip.

5. f) The Word of God gives life. It is through the Word of God that we initially come to saving faith in Christ. The Word of God continues to give life as we feed on it and gain spiritual strength. (cf. Matthew 4:4)
- Because the Word of God gives life, I must never forget it. I must memorize it.
5. g) If my mind is filled with God's Word, I will have wisdom. With God's wisdom I will hate evil (v.104). Without the wisdom of God's Word, I am simple no matter how worldly wise I may be. (cf. Proverbs 1:7)
5. h) The Word of God gives me peace and stability (it keeps me from stumbling). The Word grants peace as it reminds me that God is in control of all things and He loves me. The Word gives me stability as it instructs me in the right paths to walk and encourages me never to give up.
- Cross reference Psalm 119:127. Discuss loving God's Word even more than material wealth.
5. i) *First*, I find answers to prayer in God's Word. *Second*, I receive answers when the Word imparts wisdom to me. God speaks through His Word so it is the place to receive answers. All answers to prayer that are not received directly from God's Word must be confirmed with God's Word.
- Without the Word, our prayers are an abomination to God. (Proverbs 28:9)
- Those who *think* they have an answer to prayer, and yet the answer is not in line with the Word of God, have not received an answer from God.
6. Acts 17:10-12 They were "more fair minded," more noble minded than others. This speaks of integrity.
6. a) *First*, they "received the Word with all readiness," meaning they were open, teachable and expectant. *Second*, they "searched the scriptures daily to discern whether Paul's teachings were correct," meaning they were not gullible.
6. b) The most practical way to check things out is by referring to scripture to verify that what is being taught is correct. Look not only at the context of the verses being taught on, but become familiar enough with the Bible that you can tell if a teaching goes against the general tenor of the teaching of scripture.
- In this day and age in which we are bombarded with so much false teaching, it is imperative that we are discerning. Be open to learn, but check everything out with the Bible!

Lesson Four

1. Acts 2:42-47

1. a) Steadfastly means: *fixed* or *unchanging*.

Steadfastly emphasizes that the people were *passionate* about what they did, not *passive*. This calls on people to be intentional about their relationships in the body.

1. b) Sample observations.

- (1) They had communion together. (v.42)
 - (2) They “continued steadfastly in fellowship.” (v.42)
 - (3) They were “together.” (v.44)
 - (4) They “had all things in common” sharing their possessions and their lives. (v.44)
 - (5) They cared for each other’s needs. (v.45)
 - (6) They met daily. (v.46)
 - (7) They met in the temple and in homes. (v.46)
 - (8) They ate together. (v.46)
 - (9) They worshiped together. (v.47)
 - (10) They saw God’s saving grace together. (v.47)
- In addition to attending church services and Bible studies regularly, we meet in small groups, home Bible studies, etc. We meet for prayer meetings, and we pray for one another throughout the week.

1. c) Two things:

- (1) Gladness and simplicity of heart. They experienced the peace and joy of being Christians together in fellowship.
- (2) They saw the church grow as people were saved. Jesus said the world would know that we are Christians and that He is the Christ when they see our love [fellowship] for one another. (John 13:35, 17:20-21)

2. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

2. a) No one should say, “Because *I* am not like the others, *I* do not fit in.” The body is made up of many types of people, united by the blood of Christ.

Those who insist on having fellowship only with people they are like are failing to understand the importance of diversity in the body and our need to interact with Christians who are different from ourselves.

2. b) No one should say, “Because *you* are not like *me*, *you* do not fit in.” This kind of exclusivism is not Christ-like.

2. c) Many Christians refuse to have fellowship with the body because they think they do not fit in, simply because they are not like others or because they do not possess the same gifts as others.

Many others look down on and exclude those who are different or who have different gifts.

The important point here is that our fellowship with each other as Christians is not based on how similar or like each other we are, but on the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Our dissimilarities are what make the body a body, rather than one big foot (v.15).

2. d) We suffer together as we care for each other when one is in trouble, or ailing. We pray for those who are in

need. We pray for Christians around the world who suffer persecution.

On the other hand, we rejoice when others are honored as we celebrate God’s blessing on others at weddings, births, baptisms and at other special occasions. We encourage each other with words of encouragement and congratulations.

3. 1 Corinthians 16:1-3

3. a) The words “orders” and “must do” (v.1) reveal that giving is *expected* or *mandated*.

This points out that while many mistakenly think of giving as “optional,” it is in fact, necessary. We are not doing anything extraordinary by giving.

3. b) The text says to give when the body is gathered together on the first day of the week. *Weekly* giving is not the point. Those who are paid bi-weekly or monthly can give at those times. The point is to be *regular* rather than *sporadic*. We must be regular in our giving.

3. c) We are to give based on how God has prospered us. Giving is based on percentage of income not a set dollar amount. God requires *proportional* giving to be fair to the poor. Let us see that we are giving proportionally, based on our income.

3. d) Special collections.

Special collections are not wrong. Moses received a special collection to build the tabernacle. However, special collections tend to stir people’s emotions, or prompt giving out of guilt.

If everyone gave *regularly* and *proportionally* as we are commanded, there might never be a need for special collections.

3. e) Those who give should give to/through ministers and/or ministries they trust to handle the money responsibly and in ways that will accomplish the most spiritual good.

It is not responsible to give indiscriminately to any or every ministry that comes along. Only approved people should handle the money.

3. f) Answers will vary. Sadly, most Christians are neither *regular* nor *proportional* in their giving. Statistics show that only 9% of those who call themselves evangelical Christians tithe. Let us each examine our giving before God, and then give in obedience to God’s Word.

4. 1 Timothy 5:17-20

4. a) Show honor and respect, not *necessarily* for the man, but for the *office*. How? Pay heed and do not get defensive at their counsel.

4. b) See that the leaders are taken care of financially. Ministers whose means of livelihood is ministry should not be paid *extravagantly*, but they should be paid *generously*. They are not to become rich through ministry, but neither should they have to worry about having enough as long as they live a frugal life.

Why is this important? When ministers are forced to worry about money, their ministry may be affected. They may not preach the hard truth for fear of offending givers. They can not give full attention to shepherding

the flock if they have to be hustling work on the side to make ends meet.

Leaders take care of the people's *spiritual* needs, and the people take care of the leaders' *financial* needs.

4. c) Four steps to guard against this:

- (1) Refuse to be drawn into it because it is sin.
- (2) Direct the person to speak directly to the leader being talked about instead of talking to other people. Offer to go with them.
- (3) If the person persists, tell him that you will speak to the leader in question, and then do so.
- (4) Do not repeat what you have heard except to the leader in question.

Notice that the verse calls for 2 or 3 witnesses. This is reminiscent of OT law that called for witnesses to face the accused. The testimony of those who refuse to face those they accuse must be rejected.

John Calvin points out that accusations against leaders are particularly common and often satanic. Why? People love to find fault with leaders in hopes that they will somehow not be responsible to those leaders or to the Word the leaders proclaim. For this reason, accusations against leaders must be dealt with biblically.

4. d) The first thing to notice is that the text speaks of "those who are sinning." Note that this means that they are continuing in a lifestyle of sin, sinning *without repentance*. This does not refer to sins that are repented of.

Second, those who are *continuing in sin* must be rebuked publicly. Why? Because leaders have public lives and ministry, their sin is also public. Leaders in serious sin are not to sneak away quietly. Because they have betrayed the trust of God's people, they need to confess their sin before the congregation they have wronged.

Caution: Leaders are not perfect. The common sins that a man may commit that do not affect the body may be dealt with in private. But when a leader sins in ways that bring reproach on the Lord or His church, leaders must face these publicly.

5. Hebrews 10:24-25

5. a) To *consider* is to give careful thought to a matter. If we are to really serve one another, we must give careful thought to how to do so to bring about the greatest benefit. That we are told to consider one another in order to stir each other up, we are to look for ways to encourage and serve each other.

5. b) The goal is to encourage each other to live godly lives. We must not adopt the idea that we are to encourage those who are in sin to continue in sin.

Encouragement often takes the form of a challenge to examine one's self and make changes if needed.

Seek to build the body up. If a comment does not build up, it is better left unsaid. (cf. Ephesians 4:29.)

6. Matthew 16:18

6. a) Jesus promised that His church would triumph. Better to remain close and involved with the guaranteed winner than to try making it on your own without the Church.

6. b) We must make ourselves accountable to other Christians. We do this by becoming members of the local church and by fully participating in the life of the local church.

7. Seven observable purposes:

- (1) Equip the saints (not just the ministers) to do ministry. (v.12)
- (2) Edify (build up through instruction and encouragement) the people. (v.12)
- (3) Unify Christians. (v.13)
- (4) Help people mature in their faith. (v. 14)
- (5) Help people become discerning to recognize false teaching that deceives. (v.14)
- (6) Identify and proclaim truth. (v.15)
- (7) The church gives a place for every member to participate and use their gifts. (v.16)

8. Three observations—*there are others*.

- (1) *The Sacraments*. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacraments are not for individual or private observance.
- (2) *Church Discipline*. (Matthew 18:15-17) Christian accountability takes place only in the church and only in a church that dares to do this when necessary.
- (3) *Prayer for the sick by the elders*. (James 5:14) You cannot call for the elders if you are not a part of a church with God-ordained leaders.

Many other aspects of Christianity can take place in groups or alone. These important aspects of Christianity only take place biblically in the church. These are reasons to be a member of a church.

9. Answers will vary. Let us all examine our level of participation in the church. Let us all consider the importance of membership in a local church.

Lesson Five

1. Psalm 1:1. The counsel from the godless (regardless of how nice they may be or how good their intentions are) is inconsistent with the counsel we receive from God's Word. Godless counsel is not always 180 degrees out from God's counsel, but one degree off is enough to lead us astray.

1. a) Having non-believing friends is good, but we should not have non-believers as our *best friends* and *confidants* since their counsel is not from God.

1. b) Christians should not go to professional non-Christian counselors for any reason. It is bad enough to seek the counsel of the ungodly, but to pay for it is doubly wrong.

2. No matter where we are going or what we are doing, we should seek opportunities to share our faith and lead people to faith in Christ.
3. Luke 14:15-24
3. a) Many will make excuses to justify their unwillingness to turn to Christ.
We must realize that people's excuses are just that, *excuses*. The real reason people refuse to turn to Christ is that unless a person has a desire for Christ, placed in him by the Holy Spirit, he does not want to submit his life to Christ.
3. b) God loves His own so much, that He does not give up until they come to Him. When people refuse Christ, we must go after others. There are people out there who will receive Christ. We must not neglect those who *will* because of those who *won't*.
3. c) We must go out into the streets! We must go behind every bush! We must *compel* people to come to Christ!
3. d) Four Things:
 - (1) The command of Christ to go get them. (vv. 17, 21, 23)
 - (2) A desire to fill the Father's house. (v.23)
 - (3) Compassion on the lost, remembering that you too were once dead in sin. (Titus 3:2-3)
 - (4) We should desire to see our friends and family in heaven!
4. We share our faith in the power and in the authority of the Holy Spirit of God.
4. a) The disciples were to begin in Jerusalem which was their "own backyard." From there they were to go out into the surrounding area (Judea, the state Jerusalem was in), into neighboring areas (Samaria) and to the ends of the earth (seeking people from around the globe).
Our task is no different. We can do the most where we live, but we can also be a part of reaching the lost around the world in a number of support roles.
NOTE: Jesus said, "Jerusalem and Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." He did not say "or." We should look for ways to be involved in *all four* regions, not just one.
5. People cannot call on Christ unless someone tells them about Him. Although God sovereignly saves those He determines to save, Christians actively evangelizing the lost are the God-ordained human means through which God will save His people.
6. 2 Timothy 4:2-5
6. a) We need to be prepared to share Christ with anyone and at any time. Why? Because we never know when God is going to present us with an opportunity to do so.
6. b) Many will reject the gospel. (v.4) This must not discourage us. (v.5) We are not responsible to save people. God does that. We are responsible to proclaim the gospel with clarity and compassion. The only *failure* in evangelism is the *failure to try*.

6. c) Every Christian is to do the work of an evangelist, whether he has the gift of evangelism or not. God uses people with the gift of evangelism. He also uses those who do not have the gift of evangelism, but are faithful to proclaim the gospel.
We can tell who has the gift of evangelism primarily by the fruitfulness of their efforts. All are to share Christ, those with the gift of evangelism will be more fruitful.
7. We tell others what we personally know of Jesus. While we should learn all we can about Christ, we do not need to be worried about telling what we do *not* know.
8. John 9:24-30
8. a) He only knew that he was blind and that Jesus healed him, no more. (v.25)
8. b) He told what he knew, nothing more. It is important to note that he did not try to tell more than he knew. Many Christians get into trouble telling what they do not know!
8. c) This encourages us that while we should learn all we can about Christ, we are simply to tell what we know based on our experience with Christ.
8. d) He asked the inquirers if they wanted to follow Jesus. If we tell people about Christ but fail to invite them to follow Christ, we may have instructed them, but we haven't led them to faith in Christ.
Note also that the invitation was not merely to "believe in Jesus," but to be His disciple!
9. The gospel is: 1) Man is *ruined* by sin; 2) Jesus is God's only *remedy*; and 3) Each person must personally *receive* Christ to be saved.
One can either make a clean break and say: "This is the gospel," or work it into the testimony.
10. Do not cling to Christian fellowship to the neglect of sharing your faith with those who do not know Him. Note what Jesus told the man:
 - (1) Tell your friends [and family].
 - (2) Tell them what Jesus has done in your life.
 - (3) Tell them of God's compassion [love].

Lesson Six

1. Two things:
 - (1) The strength and integrity of the wheel is compromised. It is likely to break altogether.
 - (2) If the wheel does not break, it will be out of balance. A wheel out of balance causes tremendous wobble resulting in less than a smooth ride!
1. a) Answers will vary. What are we willing to DO, since if we see a problem and refuse to rectify it, we are deceiving ourselves according to James 1:22.
2. 1 Samuel 15.

2. a) Attack and utterly destroy everything connected with the Amalekites. Do not spare anything. (v.3)
2. b) Saul spared the king and the best of the herds. He destroyed only the “despised and worthless” things. (vv.8-9)
2. c) At first Saul claimed that he had obeyed the Lord. It is as though he believed *partial obedience* is obedience. It is not. (v.20)

Then he contradicted himself, saying that although he didn’t do as he was told, he did obey. (v.21)

Then he blamed the people. (v.21)

Then he sought to justify his disobedience saying his disobedience allowed him to sacrifice to God. (v.21)
2. d) God desires obedience rather than sacrifice. Obedience is obedience. A sacrifice may only be doing what we want to do for God that He doesn’t necessarily desire.

An example of this is the child who makes breakfast in bed for his mother, but fails to do his assigned chores in the process. Though the breakfast was a nice gesture, obedience is preferred over sacrifice.
2. e) Samuel called Saul’s disobedience *rebellion* and *stubbornness*. These are hard words, but this is what God’s Word calls disobedience.

Samuel went on to say that rebellion is like witchcraft and stubbornness like *idolatry*. When we disobey, especially when we seek to justify our disobedience like Saul did, whether we like it or not, we are committing *witchcraft and idolatry*.

How serious is it? What we might rationalize as “simple disobedience” is far more serious than we imagine.
3. We are to “hasten” to obey God, “not delaying” to keep His commandments.

Swift obedience is important because the longer we delay, the less likely we are to do it at all. Procrastination almost always leads to complete disobedience.
4. It is also disobedience to not do what we know we are supposed to do.

These two kinds of sin are known as “sins of *commission*” (committing an act of sin) and “sins of *omission*” (omitting, or failing to perform actions that are required of me).
4. a) Sins of *commission* may be more common in the lives of new Christians, but before long, the more obvious, major sins in a Christian’s life are taken care of. At that point sins of *omission* become more common. The reason is that it is not as hard to stop doing bad things as it is to start doing good things!
5. I can only have assurance when I am living in obedience. Why? Because when I am living in disobedience, there is no evidence that I am a new creature in Christ.

Consider: Disobedience does not nullify a person’s salvation. It only erodes a person’s assurance.

6. Obedience is associated with answers to prayer for two reasons:
 - (1) God does not hear my prayers if I regard iniquity in my heart. (Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:2)
 - (2) If I am living in disobedience, it is not likely that I am praying according to God’s will. (1 John 5:14-15)

Warning: This does not mean that if we are “good” God is obligated to give us what we want. Human obedience does not obligate God, it merely puts me in “the line of fire” of His blessings that are received by grace through prayer.
7. Obedience, although not easy, is not burdensome for Christians. Why? Because Christians have a God-given desire to obey Him. Because we delight in Him, we delight to do His will.
7. a) Obedience is not always easy but neither is it burdensome for the Christian because we have the Holy Spirit in us giving us the desire and the ability to obey. (See Philippians 2:12-13.)

Those who dislike obeying God, finding it to be a burden, ought to examine their relationship with Christ.
8. Fear God and keep His commandments. In other words: *OBEY*.
8. a) There are two kinds of fear:
 - (1) Fear = *afraid*. Fear of consequences
 - (2) Fear = *reverence*. Fear of offending a holy and loving God.

In either case, I will obey whom I fear, whether my fear is a “fear of consequences,” or a fear of “offending a holy and loving God.”

Obedience increases when I *know* more about God because the more I *know* about God, the more I will fear disobeying Him. This knowledge comes through devotion to God and a commitment to learning about Him.
9. Jesus said those who love Him will obey Him. Why? Because I do not want to be rebellious or stubborn toward the One I love. Disobedience is rebellion and stubbornness (1 Samuel 15:23).
9. a) 1 John 4:19 says we love God because He first loved us. The more I know of God’s love for me, the more I will love Him. To increase my obedience, I must educate myself about and meditate on God’s love for me.
10. True faith means believing God is right about everything — right enough to do whatever He says.

When I disobey, my actions say that I believe my way is better than *God’s way*. If I have complete faith in God, I will do whatever He says. Anything less is a lack of faith.

Some have the incorrect idea that faith is a way to get what I want. That is not true. Rather, faith is what motivates me to do what *God wants*.

10. a) Whenever I lack faith in God, I will do what I believe is better than what He has commanded. This is always disobedience.
10. b) Disobedience is an evidence of a lack of faith. God is pleased when we trust Him enough to do whatever He tells us to do. He is displeased when we do not trust Him enough to do as He says. He is displeased when we do not trust Him because He knows that He only tells us to do what is right and that He has demonstrated how worthy He is to be trusted.
- Illustration:** A dad is standing in a pool, his child on the edge. The dad calls the child to jump, promising to catch the child. If the child is too small to perceive danger, he jumps without thought. If the child is old enough to perceive danger, but jumps anyway, the dad is delighted because the child “trusted him” enough to jump. In the same way, God is delighted when we trust Him enough to do what He says, especially when there is risk.
11. They are: (1) Fear, (2) Love, and (3) Faith. These are three keys to obedient living.
Answers concerning application will vary.

Lesson Seven

1. Genesis 3:1-6

1. a) Four methods Satan uses:

- (1) Satan questions God’s Word. “*Has God indeed said...?*” (v.1) When we are faced with temptation we often rationalize the sin we are tempted to commit, saying to ourselves, “*God didn’t really say I couldn’t do this.*”
- (2) Satan accuses God of prohibiting us from things that are actually good for us. “*God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened...*” (v.5) When we are faced with temptation we often rationalize the sin we are tempted to commit, saying to ourselves, “*Doing this will actually be good for me.*”
- (3) Satan appealed to Eve’s senses (v.6) The fruit looked good.
- (4) Satan appealed to Eve’s pride (v.5) “*You will be great, like God!*”

1. b) Five mistakes that lead to sin:

- (1) Eve seems to have been hanging around where she should not have been. It is foolish to go where I know I should not go.
To avoid this mistake, do not go where you know you will be tempted. (Can you think of any examples?)
- (2) Eve engaged in conversation with the devil. It is best to have as little to do with the tempter as possible.
To avoid this mistake, refrain from too much thought (conversation with yourself) about temptation. Just say “no” and depart.

- (3) Eve added to God’s Word. (v.3) God did not say, “You may not touch it.” Although it is a small deviation from what God said, any deviation from God’s Word is a problem.

To avoid this mistake, know, and handle, the Word of God—accurately.

- (4) Eve made her decisions based on her physical senses, rather than on the truth of God’s Word. The fruit looked good so she ate, ignoring the truth of God’s Word concerning the matter.

To avoid this mistake, fill your mind with the Word of God and refuse to listen to your physical senses when they are contrary to God’s Word.

- (5) Eve brought Adam into sin as well. Misery (and sin) loves company!

To avoid this mistake, “esteem others better than yourself.” (Philippians 2:2:3)

2. a) Matthew 4:1-11 & Luke 4:1-13

- (1) Satan appealed to Jesus’ physical senses and appetites, saying, “*Eat.*”
- (2) Satan promised Jesus fulfillment saying, “*You can have all this if You will only...*”
- (3) Satan misused God’s Word. This is another way of attacking God’s Word.

2. b) Why Jesus succeeded:

- (1) Jesus accurately used the Word of God.
- (2) Jesus did not engage in lengthy conversation, choosing instead to tell him to be gone!
Know the Word, keep dealings with temptation short.

2. c) Memorizing scripture stores God’s Word in my Mind.

Once it is stored, the Holy Spirit will bring to my remembrance those verses that will be helpful in dealing with temptation.

3. 1 John 2:15-17

- (1) Lust of the flesh (*passions*: what I want to feel or experience).
- (2) Lust of the eyes (*possessions*: what I want to have).
- (3) Pride of life (*position*: what prestige and station of life I want to have).

3. a) Three parallels:

- (1) Satan appealed to the lust of the flesh tempting Jesus to turn stones into bread to feed Himself.
- (2) Satan appealed to the lust of the eyes by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world.
- (3) Satan appealed to the pride of life by tempting Him to do something spectacular to draw attention to Himself.

4. 1 Corinthians 10:13 God will not allow us to experience temptation beyond what we can handle (by His grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit).

4. a) The way of escape will accompany temptation. Note that the way of escape is the ability to bear it. We are *not* promised that we will be free from trial or temptation, but that God will see us through them. Consider what a comfort this promise is!

5. *Avoid temptation!* The examples Jesus used are exaggerated to make the point of how committed we must be to avoiding those things that will tempt us to sin.
5. a) Eve seems to have been hanging around the tree that she was not supposed to eat from. If she was not supposed to eat from it, she should have avoided it altogether. Advice to her and to myself:
 - (1) Stay away from that tree, Eve!
 - (2) Answers will vary. Examples may be: stay away from the internet, do not look at catalogs, don't hang around certain people, don't watch certain kinds of movies, etc.
 - (3) Stay away from those people, places or things that cause me to stumble into sin!
6. Some things we need to avoid are obvious. Others require us to "test things" to determine if they are good for us or not. If they are not good for us, we need stay away from them.
6. a) The standard is always the Word of God. If the Word of God does not endorse something, we are better off to stay away from it.
7. We can only be tempted with *things that we desire*. Example: If a man does not like bananas, he cannot be tempted to eat them. If he likes chocolate, he can be tempted to eat it. Satan and the world do not even try to tempt us to do things that do not appeal to us. That is why Satan and the world tempt us with things that appeal to our passions (lust of the flesh), possessions (lust of the eyes) and our desire for position (pride of life). These are the things we desire.
7. a) The process of temptation is:
 - (1) We have desires,
 - (2) Satan or the world tempts us to indulge in those desires inappropriately,
 - (3) Desire and wrong choices get together (conception),
 - (4) Sin is born,
 - (5) As we indulge in sin, it grows,
 - (6) When sin is allowed to grow unchecked by confession and repentance, it ends in death.

NOTE: Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted. Temptation turns to sin as we continue in the process outlined by James 1:13-15.
7. b) The ultimate result of yielding to temptation is death. Emphasize that we must realize the seriousness of this matter: *DEATH!*
7. c) Stay away from those things that will appeal to your sinful desires. Deny the flesh. Do not let desire and opportunity get together.

Lesson Eight

1. Pride. Foolishness.
2. Confess sin.

2. a) God hates sin and He says, "It must go!"
2. b) Merely *admitting guilt* does not necessarily involve any remorse or sense of obligation to repent. Confession involves contrition, or remorse and a sense of obligation to repent. If a person callously admits guilt, but does not feel remorse for having sinned and senses no obligation to repent, he has not confessed in the biblical sense.
3. We are commanded to (1) forsake wrong thoughts and actions, and (2) return to the Lord and the right way. By doing these two things, we will receive mercy and pardon.

No such promise of pardon exists for merely admitting guilt.
3. a) Answers will vary.
4. We are required to forsake sin as well as admit guilt. This is often forgotten. Many believe that admitting guilt, with no commitment to turn away from sin, is all that is required. Not so.
4. a) The longer I wait to go to God about my sin, the more likely I am to: a) become forgetful/callous regarding the sin; and b) not confess it.

When this happens, I lose out on the healing and cleansing that comes as a result of true confession.
4. b) When I am more specific about confession: a) I am more likely to be more specific about repentance; b) I will experience more specific healing and cleansing as God deals with me more specifically.
5. While God alone can forgive sins (Mark 2:7, Luke 5:21), when we confess our sins to others we receive the following benefits:
 - (1) We can encourage one another since we all tend to struggle with similar sins. We are encouraged knowing that we are not alone in our struggles.
 - (2) We can hold each other accountable concerning repentance, asking each other how we are doing in the battle to gain victory over sin.
6. a) By bringing up personal sins to those who are not affected by them, a person might be further hurt.

In some instances it is not necessary to confess a sin that involves another person if they do not know about it. For example, if a person did not know that you harbored ill-feelings toward them for years, confessing that sin to them would only hurt them. Confess that kind of sin to God alone.
6. b) Some people share "prayer requests" regarding "difficulties" others are having. This is often a means to spread gossip. Confess *your own* sins, not those of *others*.
6. c) Confessing sin to a person who is not trustworthy often leads to embarrassment when personal issues become common knowledge.

Confessing personal sin to a person who is not compassionate or who is self-righteous can result in being judged and in alienation.

6. d) People are better off not knowing more details than they need to know. Giving too much information can hurt people's reputations. It can arouse the sinful nature in some people as they enjoy the details of your sin that they do not need to know.

In a public meeting, it is advisable to be very discreet about what sins you confess and how you confess the ones you do confess since you do not know how some people will interpret, or worse, relay what you might say.

7. 1 John 1:8-9

7. a) A lack of honest confession and repentance is a silent declaration of sinlessness.

7. b) We receive *cleansing from all unrighteousness*.

Besides forgiving the sin, God will cleanse the *sinful attitudes* and the *guilt*.

We are forgiven by God in Christ even if we do not confess our sins specifically or regularly. This must be so since we do not confess all of our sins every time, which would mean that we are unforgiven. But when we fail to confess our sins, we miss out on the cleansing from unrighteousness (sinful attitudes and the guilt that so often follows sin).

8. a) God WILL forgive me based on the faithfulness of His character. Christ is my Advocate, defending me before the Father's throne. This encourages me to confess my sins faithfully so that I may receive His cleansing.

8. b) God will NEVER condemn me for my sin if I am in Christ. To condemn anyone in Christ would be to say that Christ's death was in vain. This gives me encouragement that condemnation that I might feel is not from God. God is greater than anyone who condemns me — including me since I sometimes condemn myself.

8. c) There is no sin that I can commit that can remove me from God's love and grace. His love and grace is greater than any sin that I could ever commit. This gives me confidence in His ability to keep me saved in His love.

9. I must forgive as I have been forgiven. Jesus said as much in Matthew 6:14-15. It should be our aim, not only to forgive, but to become an advocate for those who have wronged us, just as Jesus is an Advocate for us.