

The Church

Lesson One: *What Is It?*

Memory Verse: Matthew 16:18b

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Many Christians believe that their Christianity is nothing more than a *personal relationship* with Jesus Christ. Jesus *did* come to save individuals, but did not come *merely* to save individuals. He also came to save a *people* for Himself. Each of us must come to saving faith in Christ individually. However, once we are saved, we are part of the people He came to save—the people called the Church.

Individuals saved by God's grace received through faith, whether in the Old or New Testament, are the people of God, or the Church. It is a common mistake to unnecessarily separate Israel and the Church, as though God has two distinct people. He has one Church.

In our culture that exalts individualism, many Christians fail to understand the importance of being a part of the Church. In this lesson we will be challenged to deepen our understanding of the Church.

The word CHURCH has more than one meaning and usage. In this lesson we will learn about the different kinds of CHURCHES, which ones to look for, and a little about which ones to *look out for!*

In this lesson we will learn about unity and diversity. We will be challenged to evaluate our individual relationships with Christ's Church and make whatever changes would most please the Lord.

VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CHURCHES

There is a VISIBLE CHURCH and an INVISIBLE CHURCH. The INVISIBLE CHURCH is made up of all believers in Jesus Christ (from all time, both Old and New Testaments). The VISIBLE CHURCH is made up of all people who attend or are members of Christian churches.

1. Consider Matthew 13:24-30. Are all members of the VISIBLE CHURCH saved? Why or why not?

2. Read Hebrews 10:25. Are all members of the INVISIBLE CHURCH members of the VISIBLE CHURCH? Why or why not?

3. Assuming that there is a Christian church to belong to, should all members of the INVISIBLE CHURCH seek to unite with the VISIBLE CHURCH? Why or why not?

LOCAL CHURCHES

Because the VISIBLE CHURCH is so vast, it is impossible for individual believers to relate to and be an active participating member in it. That is why there are LOCAL CHURCHES. LOCAL CHURCHES are smaller groups of like-minded believers, within a particular geographic locale. They congregate together based on common understandings of doctrine and methodology.

4. Explain what is likely to happen to a member of the VISIBLE CHURCH if he will not be a part of a LOCAL CHURCH.

5. There are certain essential doctrines of the Christian faith about which all believers must agree, if they are to be Christian. However, there are many other issues about which believers and churches may differ. Read what Romans 14:1-8 says about diversity in the Church.
 - a) Must all believers think and behave in exactly the same ways concerning all issues? *Why?*
 - b) What does Paul call these issues about which it is okay for believers to differ? (v.1) Give a couple of examples.

6. 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 teaches that though we are many members, we are one indivisible body. What do vv.15-17 say to the person who excludes *himself* from the body because he feels he is different?

- a) What does v.21 say to the person who excludes *others* because they are different?

7. What can you learn from questions 5 and 6 about how members of one LOCAL CHURCH should view the members of another LOCAL CHURCH who are different? (Dress, worship style, organizational structure, etc.)

PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AND NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

There are PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS that are not NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES. There are four marks of NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES that distinguish them from PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS. A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH:

- 1) Preaches God's Word, holding to the Bible as the sole authority for all matters of faith and practice.
- 2) Administers the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism. This will be discussed in greater detail in Lesson 5.
- 3) Maintains accountability and will exercise church discipline if necessary. This will be discussed in greater detail in Lesson 4.
- 4) Has a vision for fulfilling the Great Commission (evangelism and missions).

If a church fails in any of these four areas, though it may continue to be a PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATION, it is no longer a NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

8. Not all PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS can be called NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES. Some of these groups are not good and should be avoided. Others, though not NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES, are good and helpful. Can you give any examples of these good and helpful groups that are not NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES?

- a) Why are these good PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS not a substitute for being a part of a solid NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?

Connect To Life

Be sure your home church is a valid New Testament Church.

The Church
Lesson Two: Fellowship and Accountability
Memory Verse: 1 John 1:3

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

In the first part of this lesson we will be reminded of the importance of fellowship and mutual accountability. Remember that for accountability to be of any value, we must submit to it.

FELLOWSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

When one log rolls away from a campfire two things happen. First, the campfire grows a little dimmer. Second, the log that rolled away stops burning.

The same is true regarding those who get out of Christian fellowship. The body of Christ loses some of its fire and the individual tends either to smolder, or go out altogether.

This first portion of this lesson is a reminder that "Next to the Lord, we need each other most."

1. Some believers seem to base Christian fellowship on common interests in politics, hobbies or sports. According to 1 John 1:3, what is the correct basis for Christian fellowship?

- a) Even if two believers have nothing else in common, what should they have to talk about?

- b) If a person cannot have this kind of fellowship with believers, what might we conclude about his walk with the Lord?

- c) What does this say about those who exclude themselves from Christian fellowship because they "do not have anything in common?"

2. What benefits and responsibilities do believers receive from regular Christian fellowship? (Explain what each is and how fellowship is connected.)

- a) Acts 2:44-45

- b) 1 Corinthians 12:3-11, Romans 12:3-8

- c) 1 Thessalonians 5:11

- d) James 5:14-15

- e) Proverbs 27:17

- f) Hebrews 3:12-13

3. Accountability must be voluntary — it cannot be forced. (Forced accountability is a mark of a cult.) For accountability to be maintained, what must each member agree to do? (See Ephesians 5:21)

- a) When is submitting to those who are trying to keep us accountable the most difficult and why?

Connect To Life:

Ask the Lord about the level of involvement you have in your local church. If it is what God would desire, great. If not, what changes do you need to make. Share your observations with your study group.

The Church
Lesson Three: Leadership
Memory Verse: 1 Timothy 5:17-20

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Leadership is essential. Without leadership, nothing of value gets done. This is true in the world, and it is true in the Church.

There are two levels of leadership in the Church. The first is the leadership of the One who loved the Church and gave Himself for her. This, of course, is Jesus Christ Himself.

The second level of leadership is human leadership. While infinitely below the level of Christ's leadership, human leaders are important in the Body of Christ. The Bible provides a wealth of instruction on *who* is to lead, *how* they are to lead and how those who are being led are to *follow* the leaders if the Church is to remain pure and united.

The goal of this lesson is to reinforce these important concepts regarding leadership in the church.

THE CHURCH'S ULTIMATE LEADER

1. The Church is lead by Jesus Christ. How do the following verses describe Christ's leadership relationship with the Church? Describe how the Church needs to relate to Christ based on these various relationships. (Don't settle for the obvious easy answers. Meditate on the longer passages, there is more than one lesson to be learned from several of the passages!)

a) John 15:5-11

b) John 10:11, 14-18, 25-30

c) Colossians 1:18

d) Ephesians 5:25-33 (Also Revelation 19:7-8)

e) 1 Peter 2:4-10

2. According to Ephesians 3:21 the Church is to glorify Christ. List three ways the Church (not just individuals) can do this.

THE CHURCH'S HUMAN LEADERS

3. Read Ephesians 4:11-13. Who gave the Church its human leaders?

a) Understanding that human leaders in the Church are gifts from Christ Himself, how ought the Church relate to their leaders?

4. According to 1 Timothy 5:17-20, how are we to relate to those who are in positions of leadership in the local church?

a) (v.17) Why honor? Why "*especially* those who labor in the word and doctrine"?

b) (v.18) In what tangible way, and to whom is this honor to be given? Why is this important?

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| <p>c) (v.19) Besides not making accusation, why the warning not even to “<i>receive</i> an accusation”?</p> <p>d) (v.19) What do you think is meant by, “except by two or three witnesses”?</p> <p>e) (v.19) What should you do if someone brings an accusation against the leaders to you? (Matthew 18:15-16)</p> <p>f) (v.20) If a leader is in sin, what must the church do, why are leaders dealt with differently than other members of the church and why is this important?</p> <p>5. 1 Timothy 3:1 says it is good to desire to serve the Church in a position of leadership. Why is it good?</p> <p>6. What caution does James 3:1 give to those who desire to become leaders?</p> <p>7. Read Matthew 8:5-10. What did the Centurion understand was a necessary prerequisite to having authority? (v.9)</p> | <p>8. What is the path to being a leader according to the example set by Jesus in Philippians 2:5-11?</p> <p>a) What will happen if you do what James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:6-7 command?</p> <p>b) What is likely to happen to those who take a position that they were not ready for according to Luke 14:7-11?</p> <p>9. Make a list of people whose authority you are under. (Think also of spiritual leaders in your life who do not have official titles in the Church.) How are you to relate to them in a biblical way?</p> <p>10. Make a list of people who are under your leadership. How are you to relate to them in a biblical way?</p> <p>11. Explain how some of the principles of leading and following apply to marriage and family relationships. (Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Corinthians 11:3)</p> |
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Connect to Life

Do something specific this week to communicate honor to one or more of the spiritual leaders in your life.

What level of leadership do you desire? Pray asking God for a desire to grow into the level of leadership He wants you to reach.

The Church
Lesson Four: *Membership*
Memory Verse: Romans 12:4-5

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Some people, committed to the concept of being members of Christ's universal church, see no need for, and some even reject the concept of becoming a member of a local church. Membership in a local church will not get anyone to heaven. It does, however, assist individuals and families in spiritual growth since it encourages a greater level of commitment and service.

In this lesson we will see that membership in a local church is both biblical and wise.

IS MEMBERSHIP BIBLICAL?

1. Read Acts 2:41-47, 4:4, and 5:12-14. What do these verses suggest about the concept of the church keeping record of its "members?"

2. Read Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-35. What do these passages suggest about how the church kept track of the "members" and their needs?

3. Read Acts 6:1-6. What does this passage suggest about there being some sort of structure by which the congregation could have a say in what was happening in the church?

From the above passages, it seems that there was some sort of structure in the church in Jerusalem. Though it does not say there was an official membership, common sense indicates there was some form of membership. Making the membership in a local church more formal does not take away from the biblical pattern, rather it lends valuable structure to it.

THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A MEMBER

Please read Sections 1-6 of APPENDIX ONE, "*Membership at Grace Bible Church*"

4. Please name the seven commitments that are required of members that are not required of regular attenders.

5. What are the six steps to becoming a member of Grace Bible Church?

6. Please explain the concept behind renewing membership annually.

7. Are you a *Member* of your LOCAL CHURCH?

8. If not, should you be and what will you do about this?

Connect To Life:

If you are *not* a member of a LOCAL, NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, make steps to become one.

If you are a member, renew your commitment to your LOCAL CHURCH and think of a few Christians you know who are not connected to a LOCAL, NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Share what you have learned from this lesson with one of them. Be prepared to share the results of that encounter.

The Church
Lesson Five: Discipline
Memory Verse: Matthew 18:15-17

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Some people think that church discipline is unloving. In this lesson we will see that church discipline is commanded by God, who is love. It is therefore good and right, even though it is never comfortable.

The Church tends to fall into at least one of two errors regarding church discipline. The first is to be too lax, not wanting to make waves. The second is to be too petty and rigid.

Besides counsel to exercise discipline when necessary, God's Word instructs us about when, how and to what end we are to exercise church discipline.

Please read Section 7 of APPENDIX ONE,
"Membership at Grace Bible Church"

1. According to 1 Corinthians 5:5, what is the first of the two primary goals for church discipline?
2. According to 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, what is the second of the two primary goals for church discipline?
3. Critics maintain that this is unloving. What argument can you give that this is not unloving based on 1 Corinthians 5 and 1 John 4:8?
4. What is first means of exercising church discipline according to 1 Corinthians 11:31?
5. What does 1 Peter 4:8 call us to do first when we see others in sin?

DID YOU KNOW? Historically, the three marks of a legitimate New Testament church have been, (1) preaching the Gospel, (2) administering the sacraments, and (3) exercising church discipline when necessary.

6. Read Matthew 18:15-17. Jesus prescribes four steps to take in order to deal with a problem with a fellow believer. What are the four steps? Why do you suppose He directed us to take these four steps in this order?
7. If a person refuses to be corrected, Jesus says, *"let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."* This is commonly understood to mean, "Throw the bum out!" Thinking back to how Jesus treated heathens and tax collectors, how should we better understand Jesus' teaching on how to treat one who refuses to repent?
8. 1 Corinthians 5:1 gives us a guideline about what kinds of issues need to be addressed as potential matters for church discipline. Forgetting that the sin in question was of a sexual nature, what else does Paul point out in v.1 about the sin that was to be confronted?
9. The Corinthians had a church member who was involved in a scandalous sin that hurt the testimony and credibility of the church. In the name of love, they did not want to discipline the man. What was Paul's counsel to them concerning this man? (vv.4-5)

10. What clarification did Paul give about who to withdraw from and who not to in verses 9-13? Why? Cross reference 1 John 2:19.

11. The Corinthians heeded Paul's counsel in 1 Corinthians 5. It seems however, that the man in question wanted to repent but the church was not willing to forgive and restore. What was Paul's follow-up counsel in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11?

12. The goal of church discipline is not strictly punitive, as the Corinthians seemed to have thought. What then is the proper goal of church discipline?

13. What happens to church discipline if a person is "disfellowshipped" from one church, but simply joins another church down the street where no questions are asked? What do you see as a biblical remedy for this?

14. What does Proverbs 13:24 say about refusing to discipline those who need it? How does this relate to church discipline?

Connect To Life:

Are you judging yourself so that you would not need to be disciplined? Are you seeking to overlook the faults of others? Are you willing to hold your brothers and sisters accountable if necessary? Pray for the leaders of your church that they would have wisdom and courage to exercise church discipline if it is necessary.

The Church
Lesson Six: Worship
Memory Verse: Hebrews 13:15

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

"Man was made to worship God. God gave man a harp and said, 'Here above all the creatures I have made and created I have given you the largest harp. . .you can worship me in a manner that no other creature can.' And when he sinned, man took that instrument and threw it down in the mud.

"Why did Christ come? In order that He might make worshipers out of rebels. . .Worship is the missing jewel in modern evangelicalism."

So wrote A.W. Tozer about worship. One of the chief reasons for our existence is to worship God. Sin has spoiled our ability to worship God acceptably. The grace that brings salvation and forgiveness for sin, has power also to make us worshipers again.

In this lesson we will learn about worship and be challenged to become the worshipers God created us to be. We will consider what worship is, Who is worthy of worship, and what methods of worship God desires.

WHAT IS WORSHIP & WHY DO WE DO IT?

1. Write a definition of worship.
2. Compare Exodus 34:13-14 with Matthew 4:10. What important principle is communicated in these two passages?
3. What other "gods" do we sometimes worship? How do we worship these "gods?"
4. According to 2 Kings 17:36, why are we to worship God?

HOW WE ARE TO WORSHIP GOD?

How important is worship and how quickly did man corrupt worship? The second sin recorded in the Bible is not Abel's murder by Cain. It was Cain's unacceptable worship of God.

Even if we are not worshipping other gods, there is a strong temptation to worship God in the ways people worship false gods. Too often worship of God looks more like a rock concert or a sports pep rally. It is important to remember that worship was God's idea, not ours. He, therefore, is the only One in a position to say what legitimate worship is to look like. He has defined it for us in the Bible.

Please read Deuteronomy 12. In this chapter God instructs Israel regarding worship—what is acceptable and what is not.

5. What do vv.4 and 31 say about employing the methods of man's worship of false gods in the worship of God?
6. What does v.8 say about worshipping God according to our own ideas? How are we then to know what is right and acceptable to God?
7. Read Leviticus 10:1-11. As seen in this passage, God is not only particular about how He is worshiped, there are dire consequences for worshipping Him with "strange fire." What was the penalty paid by Nadab and Abihu for their "slight deviation" from God's prescription regarding worship?
8. According to v. 10, what did God say must be properly discerned regarding worship? Why is this important?

Jesus gave important instruction regarding worship in John 4:20-24. Please read these verses.

9. What did Jesus say was the problem with the Samaritan's worship in vv.21-22? (It was *not* location.)

10. In v.23 Jesus spoke of *true* worshipers. What other kind is there? What is wrong with false worship? What is the difference between true and false worship?

11. What do you think Jesus meant by worship in *spirit* and in *truth*? (vv.23–24)

12. What does it mean to you that Jesus said, “*The Father is seeking such to worship Him*”? (v.23)

13. What does the word *must* in v.24 do to this verse?

14. How do you understand the term *first fruits* in Deuteronomy 26:8-10 and how does it apply to your worship of God?

15. What details about worship can you derive from the following verses?
 - a) Psalm 95:6 What does physical posture have to do with spiritual attitudes in worship?

 - b) We incorrectly tend to allow our feelings to motivate our worship. What better motivation is displayed by the words, “*I will praise*” in Psalm 146:2?

 - c) Sometimes you may not *feel* like worshiping the Lord. What does Hebrews 13:15 encourage you to “*offer*” in these times?

16. What kind of worship does Jesus criticize in Matthew 15:8-9? In what ways do you engage in this kind of “vain worship?” What can you do about it?

17. Matthew 2:1-11 tells of the wise men who came to worship the Christ-child. There are several practical lessons we can learn about worship from their example. What does their long journey say about convenience and worship? (v.1)
 - a) What can you learn about the fact that they fell down and worshiped Him. (v.11)

 - b) What can you learn about the fact that they “offered” special “gifts.” (v.11)

18. Please read the booklet entitled “*How Important Is The Church*,” reprinted from Halley’s Bible Handbook (available from Grace Bible Church). Comment briefly on five points made about worship.

19. God has done many wonderful things in our lives for which we praise and thank Him. However, if He had never done anything for us, but instead had left us to perish in our sin, He would still be worthy of worship. Why?

Connect To Life:

Choose one or two points learned from this lesson to apply to your worship of God in the coming week. Be prepared to share how making a conscious effort to apply these points affected your worship.

Ask students what they need to modify in their own worship habits to come more in line with Dr. Halley’s writings.

The Church
Lesson Seven: *The Sacraments*
Memory Verse: Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 11:26

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Protestants are usually too lax in their understanding and observance of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In this lesson students will be encouraged to deepen their understanding of both and make whatever changes are necessary to observe them appropriately.

As a leader be sure that you are observing these sacraments biblically as well.

Religion is man attempting to reach up to God through good deeds and ritual. Christianity is God reaching down to man through Jesus Christ. Although Christians are not called to be religious, ritual is not all bad. As long as Christian rituals are: 1) biblical and 2) observed with proper heart motivations, they can be an important part of Christian life and worship.

Jesus gave two specific rituals to His Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We do not normally call them rituals, but that is what they are. We normally call them ordinances or sacraments.

ORDINANCE: An authoritative order or command.

SACRAMENT: An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

RITUAL: A ceremony; a particularly religious ceremony.

Christians often fall into one of two extremes in their understanding and practice of the sacraments. Some tend to over-spiritualize them, believing that a person is saved or kept by observing them. This is error because salvation is "*by grace through faith, not of works,*" (Ephesians 2:8)

Others tend to minimize the importance of the sacraments as though they are optional. In doing this, some neglect them altogether.

In this lesson you will be encouraged to adopt a biblical attitude toward the sacraments that Jesus gave His Church, understanding their observance as *mandatory*, not *for* salvation but in obedience to God as a result of salvation.

BAPTISM

Baptize: From the Greek, *baptizo*, meaning "to dip."

1. Read Matthew 3:13-17 (cross reference Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-22). Did Jesus need to be baptized to be accepted by God the Father? What does that teach you about the saving power of baptism?

- a) Verse 15 says Jesus was baptized to "*fulfill all righteousness.*" Jesus did not become more righteous when He was baptized. What does that teach you about the power of baptism to make a person more righteous?

- b) Does v.16 seem to indicate Jesus was baptized by immersion or sprinkling? Why do you think so?

2. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Having all authority, Jesus commanded His disciples to "*make disciples....baptizing them.*" What reason to be baptized is revealed here?

- a) What conclusion can you make about a person who claims to be a disciple of Jesus, and yet will not be baptized?

- b) Because baptism is mentioned before "*teaching them to obey,*" what should we think if a Christian postpones baptism because he has not learned *everything* about Christianity?

3. In Acts 10:44-48 Peter was proclaiming the Word, the people believed, and the Holy Spirit fell upon them. *THEN*, they were commanded to be baptized. What does this passage say about the idea that people must be baptized in water to be saved?

4. Colossians 2:12 reveals an important symbolism of baptism. Please explain that symbolism.

There are Four Baptisms Mentioned in the New Testament:

- (1) **Baptism of JOHN:** A baptism of repentance. It was a religious baptism, valid in some lives, and merely ritual for others. This baptism does *not* save.
- (2) **Baptism into CHRIST, into the BODY of Christ:** A baptism of Regeneration, all saved people are baptized into Christ and into His Body. It is a Spiritual baptism. This is the baptism of salvation.
- (3) **Baptism in WATER:** A baptism of obedience. (It is commanded.) A physical act acknowledging and demonstrating a spiritual reality. This baptism does *not* save.
- (4) **Baptism in the HOLY SPIRIT:** All believers are indwelt by the H.S. All are not yielded to the H.S. and are therefore not experiencing the power of the H.S. This is a baptism of yielding to the H.S. and experiencing the power of the H.S.

5. Which baptism is referred to in Romans 6:1-4?

6. Please read APPENDIX TWO entitled, “Why We Believe In Believer’s Baptism.”

- a) Why *believer’s* baptism, rather than *infant* (or young child) baptism?
- b) Why should believers be baptized?
(Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38-41, 10:48)
- c) State a few incorrect motivations to be baptized.

COMMUNION or THE LORD’S SUPPER

The terms *Communion* and the *Lord’s Supper* are synonymous. They refer to the second of the two sacraments Jesus left His Church. Baptism is usually a one-time occurrence in the life of a believer. Communion, on the other hand, is to be celebrated regularly.

7. Read Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20. Briefly describe the order of the Communion service.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 11:22-26. While partaking of Communion we are to look back remembering something and look forward to another. What are those two things we should meditate on during the Communion Service, and why are they important?

9. Consider Jesus’ words in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. The instructions: “*Take eat,*” and “*This do,*” reveal a simple reason to receive Communion. What is that reason?

10. Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Paul was correcting the church at Corinth for coming to receive Communion in a manner that was not proper. Verses 18-19 reveal the heart of the problem. There were divisions in the church. Verse 21 says the people were pushy and selfish. Verses 27-34 exhort the people to come to Communion in a respectful manner that is “worthy” of such an important sacrament.

- a) What are we to do to prepare ourselves?
(v.28)

- b) What can failure to do this result in? (vv.29-30)

11. Read APPENDIX THREE entitled, “Understanding Communion.”

- a) According to the “Dynamic” view, what benefit do believers receive from partaking of Communion?

- b) Who should receive Communion and who should *not*?

CONSIDER THIS: Communion and Baptism are sacraments given to the Church. Those people who profess to be Christians, but who have no dealings with the Church, probably do not partake of the sacraments. This is disobedience.

If they partake of the sacraments *apart* from the Church they, like the Corinthians, are “*not discerning the Lord’s body*” (1 Corinthians 11:29-30). This error is rebuked in scripture as well.

Let us be associated with the Body of Christ so that we may partake of the sacraments in a “worthy manner.”

Connect to Life

If you have not been baptized you are neglecting an important obligation and are probably in disobedience. Make arrangements to be baptized.

If you have not been receiving the Lord’s Supper frequently enough or on a regular basis, or have been approaching communion in an improper manner, make whatever adjustments are necessary to begin receiving communion regularly and with a proper attitude.

The Church

Lesson Eight: *Serving / Gifts of the Spirit*

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:7

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The subject of spiritual gifts has caused a great deal of division in the Body of Christ. Because we encounter Christians from a variety of backgrounds, some very Pentecostal and others *anti*-Pentecostal, we need to remain focused on what is biblical and what is balanced. This lesson is not intended to answer every question concerning what are often known as *charismatic gifts*. The goal is to help students understand that gifts are for service of the Body of Christ, not self promotion or to fuel the fires of self-righteousness that burn in the hearts of folks on both sides of the “charismatic” debate.

Every member of the Body of Christ has been given gifts and abilities to use in honoring the Lord, serving His people and influencing the world with the gospel.

Many believers do not know what their gifts are or how to use them. In this lesson you will learn a little about the gifts of the Spirit and their purpose. You will learn some ways to discover and use your gifts for the glory of God and the building up of His kingdom.

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Spiritual gifts are abilities and proficiencies to serve the Lord and His Church. What makes spiritual gifts different from “natural talents” is that they are *given* and *charged* by the Holy Spirit to accomplish what no one could accomplish with mere natural talents. These gifts are used for God’s purposes and are blessed by God. The gift is not merely in the *doing*, but also in the *fruitfulness* of what is being done as the Holy Spirit brings forth spiritual fruit.

WHAT ABOUT CHARISMATIC GIFTS?

Some people in the Body of Christ place a greater emphasis on the “charismatic” gifts of the Spirit that, while exciting, are not nearly as oriented toward serving. At Grace Bible Church, we do not want to get side tracked on the “charismatic” debate. We want to promote service and unity, not debate and division.

WHO DISTRIBUTES SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

1. According to 1 Corinthians 12:11, Who distributes spiritual gifts to whom, and why?
 - a) Why is this important to remember?

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

2. What does 1 Corinthians 12:1 say about our understanding of spiritual gifts?

3. What do 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 & Romans 12:4-5 say about there being a diversity of gifts in the Body of Christ?

THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

4. The Lord gives spiritual gifts to *every member* of His Church. What does 1 Corinthians 12:7 say is the correct *purpose* and *use* of the gifts we have been given?
5. What are we to do with our gifts according to Romans 12:6-8?
6. What is the purpose of giving gifted people to the Church? Ephesians 4:11-16.
 - a) What does that say about ministry being done only by the leaders in the Church?

DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The use of a “spiritual gifts assessment” test may be helpful, but such tools can also be misleading in either of two ways: (1) They tend to tell us what we already know, namely, what we like to do. (2) They can mislead us into thinking that *what we like* is the same as being gifted. This may be true, but it often is not.

The following is instruction on how to Discover, Deploy, and Develop our spiritual gifts.

DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS. *Where does one begin?*

1. **PRAY (seek the Lord).** Instead of jumping into “What are *MY* GIFTS?” pray asking “Grant me a deeper intimacy with *MY LORD*.” This is the most important first step when wanting to serve the Lord and His Church. The more intimately we know our Lord, the more we will know our gifts. As you mature in your love for, and intimacy with Christ, ask the Lord of the Church what He wants His Church to be, and how He wants you to be a part of that! The goal is to know *your Lord*, not *your gifts*!

2. What about your INTERESTS & STRENGTHS?

These may be indicators, but they might not be because what you *like to do*, may not be your *strengths*, or God-given gifts.

It has been said: “*Our gifts aren’t, first and foremost, about our ability, but others’ edification.*”

3. Seek COUNSEL (*be teachable*). Why?

(a) Spiritual gifts are not our personal pursuits—they are ways we serve the Body. Therefore others in the Body (particularly leaders) need to affirm your giftedness as they see you serve (1 Timothy 4:14).

(b) Sometimes others can suggest things you have never thought of. Remember the *gifting* includes the *ability*—that you may not think you have!!

DEPLOY YOUR GIFTS. *Get busy and serve!*

1. Do not look for GLAMOUR, or places of high VISIBILITY, or NOTORIETY.

2. Look for NEEDS, VOLUNTEER to serve, and STICK with it. When aware of a need, try to meet it. Don’t be afraid to try things you are even afraid to try! Be willing to “*take the lower seat*” and see if God blesses it. Give it some time to see how God may use you. But don’t serve in hopes that you will climb the ladder to bigger things. Someone has to do the less desirable and less notable things. Maybe that’s you!

DEVELOP YOUR GIFTS. *Mature in your service!*

As you serve, you will find that God is either gifting you or not. By staying at things for a reasonable time, you will develop and mature in your giftedness.

1. Be FAITHFUL. (1 Cor. 4:2) God is looking for faithfulness, not superstars. Superstars get acclaim, but God gets glory when we are faithful.
2. Do what you do as an act of WORSHIP. God doesn’t need what any of us does, but when we do things for others as unto the Lord and for His glory, we have done it for Him! (Matthew 25:35-40)

USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

7. Once you have an idea of how God may have gifted you to serve, what is the best way to find your place in the Body? See Luke 14:7-11 and Psalm 75:6-7.

8. What does Matthew 25:14-30 say about those who do not invest their gifts and use their abilities in the most profitable way possible?

Connect to Life

If you are not already involved in a ministry in which you can use the gifts God has given you, contact the appropriate people in the church this week inquiring about how you can become involved in serving.

If you are already involved in ministry that allows you to use your gifts, continue serving faithfully, remembering that God has gifted you for His glory and for the benefit of His Body.

The Church

ANSWER KEY / DISCUSSION GUIDE

Lesson One

1. No. Not all members of the VISIBLE CHURCH are saved. People can join a church because they are religious or for cultural purposes. Being a member of the VISIBLE CHURCH does not save a person's soul.
2. No. There were Christians in the first century as well as now who have received Christ, but for various reasons do not unite with, or enter into fellowship with the VISIBLE CHURCH.
NOTE: According to this verse, forsaking the fellowship of the Church is disobedience.
3. All Christians should unite with a local church congregation. Here are five reasons:
 - (1) It is commanded in scripture. (Hebrews 10:25)
 - (2) The bulk of the New Testament is written to Churches, not individuals.
 - (3) Christians need the fellowship, accountability and encouragement we receive from other believers.
 - (4) The testimony to the world about Christianity is helped or harmed by how united Christians are. (John 13:35, 17:20-21)
 - (5) The sacraments are administered by the Church.**IMPORTANT:** Consider the fact that many people refrain from uniting with a church because they "can't find one they like." This is wrong. Every Christian should unite with a church, even if they cannot find one they love in every way.
4. The member of the INVISIBLE CHURCH (a Christian) will miss out on feeding, the sacraments, accountability, worship, involvement in ministry and missions.
5. a) No. There is room for differences in the body of Christ.
5. b) Paul refers to issues about which Christian may differ. He calls them "doubtful things." Where the Bible does not speak clearly, there is room for differences. Whether Christians can dance, drink alcohol, smoke, etc. fall into this category.
Not only may Christians differ, churches may differ as well on issues such as worship style, how to govern the Church, etc.
IMPORTANT: Consider the fact that the Bible does speak clearly on many issues, such as the deity of Christ, etc. On these issues there is no room for error. On the "doubtful things," however, we need to be charitable with one another.
5. a) & b) are opposites. Do you see how they are similar, yet opposite?
6. No one should exclude himself from the body because *he is different*. The body is made up of many different parts, yet it is one body.
People who refuse to unite with a church because they cannot find one they "like" are making this error!

6. a) No one should exclude others from the body because *they are different*. The body is made up of many different parts, yet it is one body.
People or churches that make their group exclusive, not inviting new people in are making this error. Groups that do not or will not participate or cooperate with other churches or ministries are also making this error.
7. We need to be strong on the doctrinal issues that separate Christians from non-Christians. We need to be charitable and cooperative regarding issues that do not demand absolute adherence.
"In the essentials, unity. In the non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity."
8. There are many *PARA-CHURCH* groups that are good and helpful. *Para* means beside, subsidiary, assistant. Subsidiary does not mean substitute. A *PARA-CHURCH* group is a group that is not a CHURCH but exists to help the CHURCH.
Examples of good *PARA-CHURCH* groups include, missions organizations, Christian education organizations, literature publishers.
Some *PARA-CHURCH* organizations tend to take away from the CHURCH instead of assisting. Therefore discernment is needed when determining which *PARA-CHURCH* groups to endorse and/or support.
8. a) Even good *PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS* do not possess the essential distinguishing marks of a NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Christians who are part of a *PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATION* and are *not* a part of a NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, will be deficient in these areas of their lives.

Lesson Two

1. The correct basis for Christian fellowship is our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.
1. a) Believers who are walking with the Lord have that in common no matter how different they may be in other areas of life. Believers should be able to share what is happening in their lives, and pray together even if they have nothing else to discuss.
1. b) If a person cannot have fellowship with believers unless it is based on earthly interests, it is probable that he is not in fellowship with Jesus in an intimate way.
1. c) Those who exclude themselves from Christian fellowship because they "do not have anything in common" are either not believers, or weak believers whose relationship with the Lord is so shallow they have nothing to talk about regarding Christ.

2. a) Sharing what we have to provide for the needs of others. This is not limited to money and physical needs; it includes spiritual needs as well.
NOTE: Because we never know when it will be our turn to be in need, we must be generous when we are not in need. (See Proverbs 21:13)
2. b) Sharing our gifts and doing ministry. Each person has gifts and abilities to share. We need to be together to share them.
2. c) Mutual comfort and edification. These are ways we encourage each other to stay the course.
2. d) Prayer for the sick and needy. This does not apply only to prayer by the leaders.
2. e) As we develop relationships with fellow believers we "sharpen" each other by challenging and encouraging each other.
2. f) We exhort each other concerning our level of commitment and depth of holiness, spurring each other on in the Lord.
3. Each member must agree to submit to each other in the fear of God. We respect each other as we are to respect the Lord.
3. a) It is most difficult when we are in sin. This is when we need it most, but when we are in sin, we are least likely to be willing to submit to it.
Why? If we are easily offended or become defensive, the issue that is being brought to our attention may well need attention. If that issue is not a problem, the fact that we are offended reveals that we have another problem.

Lesson Three

1. a) Jesus is the Vine and Christians are the branches.
Branches can do nothing apart from the Vine.
They must abide in and receive every bit of life from the Vine.
The branches are not at odds with each other.
The Lord prunes the branches to make them fruitful.
1. b) Jesus is the Good Shepherd and Christians are the sheep of His fold.
The Good Shepherd willingly lays down His life for the sheep (v.11, 17-18) so they owe everything to Him.
The Good Shepherd knows and is known by the sheep (v.14). An intimate relationship exists.
The Good Shepherd has many sheep, including those who are different from any particular sub-group (v.16) so the sheep must be charitable to other sheep who are different, yet belong to the Shepherd.
Sheep hear and respond to the voice of the Shepherd (v.27). Those who do not hear and receive the voice of the Shepherd are not His sheep (v.26).

Therefore those who are sheep must listen to the voice of the Shepherd.

The sheep are completely and eternally safe in the hand of the Good Shepherd (v.28-30).

1. c) Jesus is the Head of the Body and Christians are the members of the Body.
Without a head, the members are dead. Without the head, the members have no direction.
Only a sick body has members that are opposed to each other.
1. d) Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is bride.
As the Husband loves and cares for the bride, so Christ loves and cares for the Church (v.25-28).
As the bride submits to and respects the loving servant leadership of the good husband, so the Church is to submit to and respect the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. e) Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone (v.6) upon which the Church is built. Christians are precious and living stones being fitted together to build the Temple of the Lord (v.4-5).
Jesus is rejected by those who are not His (v.7-8). Those who are His are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people, called from darkness into light, the recipients of God's mercy (v.9-10).
2. Answers will vary. The Church can glorify Christ by:
 - (1) being like Him in holiness, justice and mercy.
 - (2) remaining true to the gospel, refusing to compromise on any point of it.
 - (3) worshiping God in pure and biblical ways.
 - (4) proclaiming the gospel to those who have not yet heard.
3. Jesus Christ gave the Church its human leaders.
3. a) The more we understand that God gave the Church the leaders it has, the more we will honor them.
Because human leaders are human, and therefore fallible, they will make mistakes. But remembering that these people are God's gifts to His Church, we need to be patient with them, knowing that as God gave them, He can also deal with them when they err.
4. We are told to give double honor to human leaders.
Point out that since it says give "double honor" to leaders, we are to give honor to everyone in the body!
Point out that there is a difference between "Ruling Elders" and "Teaching Elders." All elders are "Ruling elders," providing leadership to the local church. Some "Ruling Elders" are also "Teaching Elders," who have the additional responsibility to preach and teach.
4. a) We are to honor human leaders because they are God's gifts and the instrument through whom He speaks to and guides His Church.
Those who labor in the word and doctrine are more likely to have insights into God's character than those who do not.

Consider: Leaders are not more valuable, but they do have more responsibility.

4. b) The Church is to be responsible to provide for the physical and financial needs of those elders who work "full-time" at the ministry, not having additional outside employment. Very small churches may not be able to supply all of their pastor's needs and he may have to work part-time to provide for his family. Pastors who are paid for their work in ministry should be paid well, but they should not be paid excessively nor live extravagantly.
- This is important so that these ministers can give themselves completely to the ministry without distraction or concern about making enough money to care for their families, or the temptation to compromise for fear of not having enough.
4. c) When we receive an accusation, we give the person making the accusation an audience. As long as gossips have an audience, they will continue to gossip.
4. d) This phrase refers to an unsubstantiated accusation. If there are a number of reliable witnesses who can corroborate an accusation, the leader in question needs to face the charges.
- Point out that the Old Testament Law required two witnesses to confirm an accusation. (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15)
4. e) Here are five steps to take:
- (1) Stop the accuser and ask if they have spoken to the one being accused. If not, offer to go with the accuser so that the accused can deal with the issue.
 - (2) Ask the accuser what other witnesses or evidence exist to substantiate the accusation.
 - (3) If there is merit to the accusation and the accused will not deal with it, then it is best to go to another leader who can look into the matter more fully.
 - (4) Do not discuss the matter with others who are not in leadership and see that the accuser does not either.
 - (5) If there is no merit to the accusation, charge the accuser to stop and repent. Repentance requires that everyone who has been drawn into the gossip (including the accused) be contacted, so that the accuser may ask for forgiveness from each.
4. f) If a leader is in sin, and if the nature of the sin is scandalous enough to bring reproach on the body of Christ, the leader must be rebuked publicly. This *must* be done; but only if it *must* be done.
- Of course, the goal is repentance, but when a leader sins scandalously, he may need to be removed from ministry until such time as his repentance is as famous as his sin was infamous.
- Why the public rebuke? Leaders have public ministries, their lives are public and so their sin also is public. Those who would receive the honor

prescribed in v.17 must be willing to receive the rebuke of v.20 if necessary.

5. It is good to desire to serve in a position of leadership because it demonstrates desire to follow, serve and honor Christ in the fullest.
- Because there seems always to be a shortage of truly committed servant-leaders, it is good for the Church to have many godly servant-leaders to follow.
6. James sounds a sober warning. Not everyone should desire a position of leadership. Why? Because with the honor comes tremendous responsibility.
- Read the list of qualification for leaders in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Point out that these characteristics are required of *all* Christians. The difference for leaders is that they *must* have them.
- Besides having the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 (read them with your students), the key to leadership is motive. Those who desire positions of leadership for self promotion and aggrandizement are unfit and will lead the Church into serious trouble if allowed to lead.
7. The Centurion understood authority, not simply because he had authority, but because he was a man *under* authority. He understood that one cannot lead unless they are also following. Teachers must be teachable. Leaders in the Church must be submissive to other leaders and to the Lord.
8. Humble yourself, serve, be obedient — even when it is painful and inconvenient.
- STRESS THIS POINT: Kingdom leadership is servant leadership. Refer to Matthew 20:25-28.
8. a) Those who humble themselves will be exalted by the Lord.
- Note that Peter says the humble will be exalted "in due season." It is seldom instant, but to the truly humble, it does not matter that exaltation is long in coming since the truly humble are not seeking to be exalted.
- Note also that we are to humble ourselves. It is incorrect to pray, "God, humble me." We may pray asking for a humble spirit, but we are to humble ourselves!
8. b) Those who are greedy for position may get position — for a time. But eventually they will be humbled.
- The way to find what level of leadership God has called you to is to take the lower seat and wait for the Lord to promote you in His timing.
9. Answers will vary. They may include pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, Home Fellowship leaders, etc.
- Ask student to give specific examples of how they can demonstrate honor to those whom God has placed over them.
10. Answers will vary. They may include students, Home Fellowship members, prayer partners, children, etc.
- Ask student to give specific examples of how they can demonstrate servant leadership to those whom God has given them to lead.

11. Answers will vary. If you are leading men, emphasize the importance of spiritual leadership and servant leadership. If you are leading women emphasize the importance of following in submission unless being led to sin, trusting that God will speak to the husband as the leader of the home.

Lesson Four

1. That there was a record of the number of people being added to the church indicates that some records of membership were being kept.
2. There must have been some sort of means by which the church knew who was giving and who was in need so that the gifts could be fairly distributed. The church appears to have been meeting needs of its "members" only.
3. It appears that the congregation had some input into this decision. If there was no "membership," what would have stopped anybody off the street from "voting?" There seems to have been some sort of membership to determine who had a say and who did not.
4. Seven commitments of a member:
 - (1) Attend 75% of the time.
 - (2) Participate by serving in some ministry.
 - (3) Participate by giving (tithing).
 - (4) Receive the Lord's Supper regularly and frequently.
 - (5) Understand and concur with the vision and distinctives of the church.
 - (6) Submit to the spiritual leadership of the church's elders.
 - (7) Desire to be held accountable by the church, including church discipline if necessary.
5. Six steps to become a member of Grace Bible Church:
 - (1) Be a baptized believer in Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Live a lifestyle that does not contradict your profession of faith.
 - (3) Demonstrate commitment to the church by attending, serving, and giving.
 - (4) Be 18 years old.
 - (5) Be willing to submit to the leadership of the church.
 - (6) Apply for membership
6. This helps the elders follow up on people who may be drifting and it helps keep people mindful of their commitments as members. The goal is never to terminate membership, but to help people remain growing and committed.

7/8. Answers will vary.

If you are not a member of your church, please consider making this important commitment.

If you are a member of your church, please consider renewing your commitment to your LOCAL CHURCH.

If you are not yet 18 years old, please consider making the same commitment to your LOCAL CHURCH that is required of *members*, and to formally become a *member* when you are of legal age.

Official Membership at Grace Bible Church is not available to those under 18 years of age. The reason for this is so that the family with a large number of young children does not have an unnatural inflated number of immature votes on issues about which the church might be called upon to vote.

Lesson Five

1. Church discipline is for the preservation of the one in sin. It is God's appointed way to bring a person to repentance.
2. Church discipline is important to maintain purity in the church.
3. God commands church discipline and God is love. Therefore if it seems unloving, it is because we do not understand perfect love.
4. Each person is to exercise self-discipline. If we did this there is no need for any further discipline.
5. We need to seek to overlook the sins of others, giving each other the benefit of the doubt. The idea is do not jump to hasty conclusions. This does not mean that blatant or scandalous sin is overlooked for the sake of love. That is what the church in Corinth was doing in 1 Corinthians 5. They were corrected for this error. What this does mean is that we must refrain from judging one another unnecessarily.
6. Four steps of discipline from Matthew 18:15
 - Step #1: Go to the person privately.* If a problem can be handled privately it is best. This keeps problems from becoming gossip or scandal.
 - Step #2: Bring a witness or two.* If a person will not listen, bringing witnesses adds weight to the charge and passion to the desire to make things right.
 - Step #3: Bring it before the church.* (This must go through the leadership of the church.) If a person will not listen privately, they may listen publicly. This adds even more weight and passion.
 - Step #4: Withdraw fellowship.* As a last resort, if a person will not heed correction, and if their sin is of a nature that it will hurt the church, they must be put out — but only until such time as they repent and can be restored.
7. Do not condone the sin, but keep the door open for the possibility of future repentance. Make sure the person understands that he cannot enjoy the benefits of fellowship, but that the door remains open in the event that he does want to repent.

8. The sin was so bad that even non-Christians saw it as sin. The church must deal with scandalous sin that brings reproach on the Lord and His church.
9. Put him out of the fellowship until such time as he repents.

Paul says, "deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved." This means turn the sinner over to his sinful ways. Satan is not easy on sinners. If he is a Christian, he will either die in sin and be forgiven, or repent.

10. Withdraw fellowship from believers in sin, not from unbelievers in sin. We cannot expect non-believers to act like believers, but we must insist that believers do. We do not want to cut off non-believers we are seeking to reach.
11. Do not withhold forgiveness and restoration from one who repents! Reaffirm love toward the repentant.
12. The goal of church discipline is always repentance, followed by forgiveness and restoration.
13. When churches do not recognize and honor the legitimate acts of discipline of another church, the God-ordained process breaks down. The church ends up opposing Christ.

The way to remedy this tragedy in the modern church is for churches to check up on new people's church backgrounds. If people are running from discipline (or other problems) they need to be directed to go back and make things right before they are received by the new church. This needs to be done across denominational lines.

14. Those who do not discipline their children are not being loving. They are acting as though they that the child since they are not doing what is in the child's best interests.

The same is true of spiritual leader sin in a church who disobey the clear teaching of scripture regarding church discipline. They are not acting loving, they are acting as though they hate the people in their care.

This again should remind church members that church discipline is an act of love, and the leaders should be supported when they are forced to take these kinds of steps.

Lesson Six

1. The English word "worship" means to ascribe "worth-ship." It means to give honor and respect to God who alone is ultimately worthy of worship.

The definition of worship from Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language is:
"To adore; to pay divine honors to; to reverence with supreme respect and veneration. To honor with extravagant love and extreme submission."

2. God is to be the exclusive object of our worship.

3. Answers will vary. We worship ourselves, wealth, material possessions, success, power, relationships, entertainment, sports, etc. We worship these things in two ways:

- (1) Giving them priority over God in our affections.
 - (2) Investing a larger amount of our life's resources in the quest to acquire and retain these things.
- Note that even good things can become false gods that steal our worship from God. Example: It is good for parents to love their children dearly, but parents must not worship their children!

4. The Israelites were to worship God for having delivered them from bondage in Egypt with great power.

As Christians we worship God because He delivered us from bondage to sin, death and eternal damnation. We worship God for all He has done on our behalf.

5. We are not to worship God using the methods used by the world in the worship of their gods.
6. We are not free to worship God according to our own ideas. The only right and acceptable way to worship God is according to His instruction in the Bible.
7. Nadab and Abihu were killed for offering strange fire.
Please note that God was so justified in this seemingly severe action, that Aaron, the boys' father was forbidden to weep over their deaths since the punishment was justly deserved.

8. God said we must discern the difference between what is holy and what is unholy. This is important not only because God is holy, but because we must not treat worship of a holy God as a common, or unholy thing.
9. The Samaritans did not know what [Who] they were worshipping. It was just a religious exercise devoid of understanding.
10. There are false worshipers as well as true worshipers.
A false worshiper is worshiping God in a manner that is not acceptable to God. He is therefore, not only wasting his time, he is heaping judgment on himself.

11. Worship in Spirit and in truth:
 - (1) Worship in Spirit is worship that is directed by the Holy Spirit rather than being generated by the flesh. Spiritual worship honors God and is acceptable to God. Fleshly worship serves man and is unacceptable to God. (discuss what fleshly worship is.
 - 2) Worship in truth is worship that engages the mind in what is correct. Worshiping the correct God in ways that are acceptable to God.

12. God desires worship. He does not *NEED* worship, but it *PLEASES* Him. We were created for God's pleasure (Revelation 4:11). Not all people worship God, so He is seeking, or looking for, those who will
13. That we must worship God means worship is imperative. It is a command to worship God.

The word must, means that worship of God is exclusive. We must worship God only, and we must worship Him according in ways that are revealed in the Bible and are acceptable to Him. What is acceptable to Him? Worship that is in spirit and in truth.

14. Everything we have, we have because God has given it to us. First fruits are the first and the best we have received from God, offered back to Him in worship.

God wants our best—not leftovers. Coming to worship over-tired or disinterested because we have spent ourselves on other things (work, play, etc.) is a way of giving God leftovers. We need to give God the first and best of our time, energy, money, and talents as acts of worship.

- 15.a) The physical act of bowing or kneeling does not make one more acceptable to God. These, if done with pure motives, demonstrate humility, which God does have regard for.

Do not wait to *feel* inspired to worship God through body posture. By lifting your hands or through standing you are likely to become more worshipful.

15. b) By saying “I will praise,” the Psalmist was declaring that as an act of his will, he was determined to worship God. Those whose worship is regulated by their feelings would do well to make a determination to worship God, regardless of feelings.

15. c) Worship is a sacrifice at times. There are no more sacrifices needed to get to God since Jesus offered Himself as the perfect and final sacrifice for sins. Now, in response to His sacrifice, we offer the “sacrifice of praise,” not to get to God but in thanksgiving for Jesus’ sacrifice that made access to God freely available.

16. God finds no pleasure in words or actions that are not motivated by hearts that are on fire for Him. He calls these religious acts without heart, “vain.” (v.9)

Whenever I sing, pray, lift my hands, etc. and am not thinking about God or what I am doing, I am worshiping in vain. God detests this.

Do things that will help me avoid distraction and remain focused, e.g., sit toward the front, close eyes, prepare my heart for worship through prayer and meditation.

17. Worshiping God is not based on convenience. Skipping worship because it is inconvenient is sin.

17. a) By falling down [bowing and kneeling] they were showing honor and respect for the Lord. Worship must be offered in humility. Worship is often enhanced by physical posture that reminds the worshiper of God’s greatness and his own lowliness.

17. b) Worship is “offered” to God as a sacrifice and as a gift. Giving money is an act of worship.

What they gave was costly, reminding us to give of our first fruits, not of our left-overs.

18. Answers will vary. Discuss observations in your study group.

19. God is worthy to be praised even if He did nothing for us because HE IS GOD! Who He is makes Him worthy of all honor and praise.

Technically, even the banishing of the lost to hell will be reason to worship God because it will underscore the absolute justice and sovereignty of Almighty God.

Be thankful you can worship Him for all He does in addition to worshipping Him for who He is.

Lesson Seven

1. Jesus did not need to be baptized to be accepted by the Father. This teaches us that that baptism is not a means of gaining acceptance with God.

Ephesians 1:6 says our acceptance before God is in Christ, not in anything that we may do.

1. a) We are declared righteous (justified) by God’s grace, received through faith in Christ, not by anything that we may do.

While being baptized is an act of obedience, it does not make us more righteous.

1. b) The fact that Jesus “*came up out of the water*” indicates that He first went down into the water. This is evidence that biblical baptism is by immersion.

Inform students that while we practice baptism by immersion, because we believe it is biblical, we do not condemn those who baptize by sprinkling, nor do we break fellowship with them.

2. Baptism is COMMANDED by Jesus Christ, who has all authority. This underscores the importance of baptism. It reveals that failure to be baptized is disobedience to Christ’s command.

2. a) Those who call themselves disciples and yet are not baptized are either:

- (1) ignorant of Christ’s command and need to be informed, or
- (2) in disobedience to Christ’s command and need to be exhorted to obey.

2. b) It is not necessary for a person to be baptized immediately upon professing faith in Christ. It is often good to wait long enough to determine if the conversion is genuine.

However, Christians should not wait until they understand everything about Christianity. First, because that will not happen in this life. Second because the text says baptize them and then teach them all that Christ commanded.

3. The people were saved and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit before being baptized. This proves that water baptism does not save but is to follow salvation.

4. Baptism is a symbol that demonstrates one’s identification with Christ. When a person is baptized by immersion, he is “buried” in a watery grave and then “rises” to newness of life, thus identifying with

Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. This is a physical symbol of a spiritual reality.

5. The baptism in Romans 6:1-4 is the baptism into Christ and into the Body of Christ. This baptism happens when a person is saved. Romans 6:1-4 does not refer to water baptism, although water baptism is a beautiful symbol of the baptism into Christ.
6. a) There are no instances in the New Testament nowhere either infants or non-believers were baptized. Although tradition endorses infant baptism, the Word of God is our sole authority for all matters of faith and practice.

At what age is a person old enough to be baptized? There is no set age. Grace Bible Church encourages young people to wait until they are in their teens because often younger children have not yet matured enough to have a "faith of their own," and are still walking in their parent's faith.
6. b) Four reasons to be baptized.
 - (1) Baptism is commanded by Jesus. (Matthew 28:19)
 - (2) Baptism is commanded by the Apostle Peter. (Acts 2:38-41, 10:48)In addition:
 - (3) Jesus set an example to be baptized. (Matthew 3:13-17)
 - (4) Baptism is taught in the letters of the New Testament. (Colossians 2:11-12, 1 Peter 3:21)
6. c) Three incorrect motives to be baptized:
 - (1) For salvation. Baptism does not save. It is done because one is saved already. (Acts 8:38-41)
 - (2) To become more spiritual. Baptism does not make a person more spiritual. Believers in Corinth were baptized and yet were "carnal." (1 Corinthians 1:13-16, 3:1-3)
 - (3) Due to pressure from others. Parents, spouses and other well-meaning friends often try to pressure people to be baptized for *their* peace of mind. People should be baptized because God's Word commands believers to be baptized.
7. The order for communion:
 - (1) Jesus blessed and broke bread and gave it to the disciples declaring it to be His body, given for His disciples. He commanded the disciples to eat it in remembrance of Him.
 - (2) Jesus gave thanks for the cup of wine, gave it to His disciples declaring it to be the cup of the new covenant in His blood which was to be shed for the remission of sins. He commanded His disciples to drink from it.
8. Two things to meditate on during Communion:
 - (1) We are to remember what Jesus did for us by offering up His body and blood for us.
 - (2) We are to look forward to His second coming.
9. Jesus commanded it. Consider that when believers neglect communion they are in disobedience to

Christ's command. We should receive the Lord's Supper at least once each month.

10. a) We are to examine ourselves to be sure we are coming to the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner.

Understand that our worthiness to receive the Supper is based on Christ. What Paul is referring to is the manner, or attitude we have when we are receiving communion.

The failure of the Corinthians was not that they had sin in their lives—all Christians do. Their problem was that they were not discerning the "body of Christ." This was evident in that there were divisions in the church, they were not acting lovingly toward each other and they were not receiving communion reverently.
10. b) Sickness and even death. This points out the seriousness of the matter!
11. a) Believers receive spiritual nourishment from the communion supper.

Some may think this is to "mystical." Remember that we receive spiritual nourishment from the Word of God as well. Communion is another means of receiving Spiritual nourishment.
11. b) **ONLY** Christians should receive communion. Non-believers should not receive communion.

Believers who are in sin, or who are guilty of "not discerning the body of Christ" should not receive the Lord's Supper *UNTIL* they have confessed their sin and sought to make things right.

Regarding the question of whether children should receive communion, there is no specific teaching in the Bible. Wisdom says that children should be old enough to understand something of what the Lord's supper means. We say something, because which of us has *complete* understanding? Beyond this, this is a matter for parents to decide.

Lesson Eight

1. Spiritual gifts are distributed to all believers, by God, according to His sovereign will (not according to our desires).
 - a) This is important to remember so that (1) no one can rightly say they have no gifts, (2) no one can claim to have received a particular gift because of anything that person has done, and (3) God gets the credit for our gifts.
2. We must not be ignorant of spiritual gifts. So much misinformation and wrong thinking about spiritual gifts is due to unbiblical teaching. We must know what God's Word says about this important subject.
3. There are many different gifts. They are given by God to all sorts of people. We must not insist that everyone have the same gift or gifts.

4. The purpose of spiritual gifts is singular: to *serve* the body of Christ. They are given for the profit of all, not the profit of the one with the gift.
5. Romans 12:6-8 teaches us that no matter what our gifts are, we are to exercise them, serving others.
6. Ephesians 4:11-16 instructs us of the following:
 - The gifts are given by Christ.
 - They are to be used to build up the Church toward spiritual maturity.
 - The teaching and instructive gifts will remain important until Christ returns.
 - a) This also reminds us that the entire Body (not merely the leaders) is to be serving in ministry.
7. Luke 14:7-11 is the parable that teaches us to “take the lower seat” and wait for God to raise us up. When it comes to serving with spiritual gifts, be willing to do whatever needs to be done, no matter how menial it may be. God may later give you greater tasks depending on your faithfulness.

Psalm 75:6-7 reminds us that promotion comes from the Lord, not from ourselves, or even from other people. This instructs us to be faithful and content with where He is pleased to use us.

Scripture teaches us not to despise the day of small things” (Zechariah 4:10), and to be faithful in “little” before expecting greater things (Luke 19:17).
8. Those who do not invest (use wisely and industriously) what God has given (including spiritual gifts) will be judged. It appears in the parable that the unwise steward really didn’t know his Lord accurately. This does not mean that Christians can lose their salvation due to a lack of serving, but it is an indicator of how important it is to use our gifts.