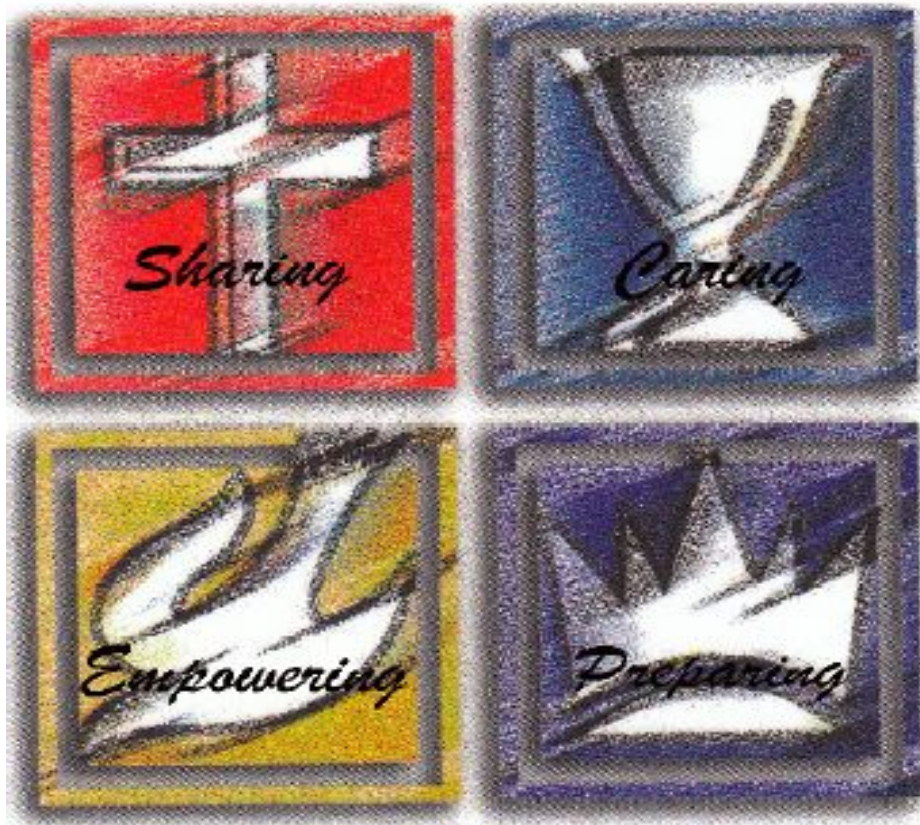


FOURSQUARE **MINISTRY TRAINING**



MODULE NINE **HEALTHY CHURCH**

LIFE

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MODULE 9: MATURITY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
PART TWO: HEALTHY CHURCH FAMILY LIFE

LESSON 1. WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Healthy Church Family Life begins with worshipping together, and taking Communion as the sign that we belong to God's Covenant Family bought with Jesus own Blood.

A. The Importance of Christ's Communion for every Christian Child of God:

Imagine a father sending out invitations to all His children to come to the Family Home each Sunday; and take their place at the Family Table **to honour His Son**; because He sacrificed His life and Blood to pay for their sins and reconcile them back forever to Father. He sets a place, and seat for each one at the Table, but the seat at the Head of the Table is for His honoured, present, resurrected Son Jesus. The Son takes His place; and the family hushes, and then the members begin to Bless, and Thank Him for all He has done for them. Gladly they have left what they are doing to assemble for their weekly Sunday Celebration and Thanksgiving, to answer Father's call. **BUT**. ..there are gaps at the table. A number of chairs are empty. Some of the family haven't responded to Father's invitation. Those gathered, look at the seats that are empty, and are filled with sorrow, because they love those who are meant to be seated there, and they miss them.. they are one in Spirit with them.. they are Covenant Family! They also feel sorry for Father, that His children haven't done what He asked. They feel sad for Jesus at the Head of the Table, because it is so important to totally respect Him now, because later everyone will bow their knees in front of Him. Of course, it's all about what He went through for you- that together we can celebrate through "the Lord's Supper"; our own personal miracles which have happened within.. that He is now living inside us; and we are alive in Him.

Our Lord's "house", where we gather each week, isn't made with wood, and metal. It's made of God's living children. Father says that each of us is like a "living-stone", who joined together form a living spiritual house, made up of Believers. Each one of us is part of Jesus 'the Rock'. With Him in us.. we are His "mini-rocks". Father calls us "My Royal Priests"; and "My Holy Nation"; and "The People that belong to Me"; and "Praisers of Jesus who brought you out of darkness into His Glorious Light". Each one of us functions uniquely for Jesus. **BUT**..combined in one unified heart at His Table, we actually form His "visible Body". In this way we worship Him who joined us as One. With wholehearted

love we are ready to be moved by His Spirit in us- to encourage each other, Love each other, and build each other up. Jesus says.. "Heaven is My Throne, the Earth is My footstool, what House will you build for me?" In your Covenant relationship with Him, will you be faithful to Him? Yes, we are the living "House of the Lord"! So, how awful it is to see great 'holes' in the wall where people have simply fallen out- somehow. His House needs to be complete each week. We can't do without each other. You are in this Family, for your own, and God's good purposes. If you haven't had a revelation on this yet, ask Him to make it real for you, dear invited one. *Christ Jesus commands us-"Do this as a Memorial of Me!"*

B. GOD'S BLOOD COVENANT THROUGH JESUS

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 ⁴Such confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶**He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant**—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

God tells us that we are ministers of the New Covenant. Do we know what this really means?

Hebrews 8:6.. But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which **He is mediator** is superior to the old one, since **the new covenant is established on better promises..**" Jesus is the Mediator.. one who stands between Heaven and Earth and brings us BETTER promises, in this better Covenant. Jesus' Covenant is His Will.. you are in His Will.. His Testament.

The importance of the word Covenant in the Bible

The Bible is divided into the New Testament and the Old Testament. It is divided into TWO COVENANTS. The word "*berith*" is the Hebrew word for covenant found in the Old Testament, and it is mentioned a whopping 280 times. "*Diathekai*" is the Greek word for Covenant in the New Testament is mentioned 33 times! What God's Covenant is not: It is not a "contract" like we sign today. If a modern contract is violated no-one dies.

Rethinking our way back into what the old covenants were really like..

The original meaning of Blood Covenant:

- **Binding**.. the only way to get out of it is to die. The consequences were that if you broke the covenant in Biblical times you died. The only way to be released from it was by death. It is the most powerful form of joining two parties that the earth has. Blood covenants have been practised all over the Earth.. Africa, Asia, America. Blood Covenant in the Bible was of this older understanding.. and we need to think our way back into that mentality.
- Made between two parties.. husband and wife; tribes; kings (e.g. A King would even make a blood covenant with his own people.. even shed blood

with his people to bring unity and strength! It made them "all for one, and one for all" ..with absolutely no reneging!)

- In the Bible Christ's New Covenant is based on LOVE
- Very often in Biblical times it was based on "strengths and weaknesses".. where covenants were made on how they could mutually help each other. Together they become stronger. Strengthen the weaknesses. E.g. one could provide military protection while the other might provide food. They both needed each other for mutually beneficial reasons.
- Covenants had conditions.. and they could last up to eight generations! It represents unborn children.

A typical format for making a covenant in Old Testament times would consist of these twelve elements..

The head of the two tribes, who represented the whole tribe would come together in front of all their people, and together represented all the people. These tribal heads would shed blood on behalf of the tribe, because they were already in covenant with their own people. The heads were literally laying down their life for their tribe.

- Firstly.. the two heads would **exchange their coats**.. robes of rank.. "all I am and have now belongs to you"..
- then exchange their **weapon belts**.. " all my power and strength now belongs to you." ..
- then take an animal, normally a large one, like a bull, or ox. The two heads would kill the animal and split it right down the middle into two halves..right through the center, and they would be working together in blood.. right through the guts to the end. Then would come the **walk of blood** together around the two halves in the sign pathway of "infinity".. like an 8 on it's side.
- **The exchange of blood would follow**.. the flesh of the heads hands would be cut.. their hands held up for all to see.. and then they would clasp hands (*origin of the handshake*).."my life is in you, and your life is in me". They swore covenant..**we are one together**.. **your life is my life and my life is your life**.
- **Blessings and cursings as covenant conditions were yelled out for all to hear:** The Blessings: "All I have is yours.. you are blessed now". Curses: If you break this covenant, this is what I will do to you." The Terms of the Covenant are now 100% in place, and the terms are in concrete. What is his is mine, and what is mine is his. What is theirs is ours.. "so help me God" was the Jewish way of confirming it.
- **The seal of the Covenant was the "ring" scar.** Scars can be seen.. they are visible.. so that everyone can see that you are in covenant forever. They infected the cuts with soil so that the scars stood up very prominently. They have sworn in blood to both Provide and Protect each

other. In marriage scars were often cut around the thumb. There was no divorce because they were in covenant forever. If she or he violates it they will die. i.e. "Even if the covenant kills me, I cannot escape from it."

- **Exchange of Names.** They also merged their names.. Black and White became Black-white.. if you touched one you got both.
- **Covenant meal.** Bread and wine were brought out. They did not drip blood into the wine.. but they said.. this represents my life, and we celebrate our oneness with this meal.. and remember everything it represents as powerfully now as the moment it took place in the past.
- **Memorial.** A large pile of stones was set up, so that everyone passing by could read that these two were in covenant. The words were of the covenant were written on the capstone at the top for all generations to read. Meals were shared as reminders of the Covenant.. 'covenant reminders'.. "I live in constant, conscious reality of the covenant that binds our lives together".. and time doesn't weaken, or diminish the day it was forged in blood. **"I am constantly thinking of ways that I can honour and keep this covenant!"**

God's Covenant with Abram

Genesis 12:1-4 The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."² "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. "

.. The Abrahamic Covenant.. God is a Covenant-making God.. IT IS HOW HE WORKS! The binding curse would be placed by God on anybody who curses you. Don't mess with anyone who is in covenant with God. Abraham now had a commitment with God.

Genesis 12:10-20.¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance,¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live.¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go."²⁰ And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had. **God keeps His part of the Covenant even though Abraham still does not have confidence in the covenant. In this passage, he gets Sarah to lie to Pharaoh that she was his**

sister, not his wife. Pharaoh treated Abraham well for her sake.. loaded him with riches. The Pharaoh finds out that Sarah has lied. God begins to plague Pharaoh's house, because Pharaoh is about to become a curse to Abraham. Pharaoh is cursed on the spot. **V.20** Pharaoh changes his mind about Sarah.. but sends Abraham out with all he had been given.. very rich in livestock, silver and gold! God Blessed Abraham, and protected him. **This is the same unchanging God that we are in Covenant with! Get back to God's reality with you!**

Genesis 14:14-16 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶ So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. *Later..*

Abraham with 318 trained household members defeated Cherdolaomer and the other three kings, who had already defeated the other five kings in the Jordan Valley when Lot was about to be attacked. **Abraham now has the goods and treasure of nine kings!** That is your God.. Abraham is already rich! Why.. Abraham is in covenant with He who knows how to win.

Genesis 14:17-20 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth." ²⁰ And **praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.** Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Melchizedek shows up out of nowhere.. King of Salem (shalom=peace) .. the Priest of God most High.. bringing bread and wine. A Covenant Feast is taking place between God through Melchizedek with Abraham. "God Most High has delivered your enemies into your hands".. and Abraham gave him 10% of all he had. When the King of Sodom came to try and make an agreement.. Abraham says..**"I have raised my hands to the God Most High"** (*the sign of the Covenant already in place*).. He will take care of me..if I agree with you.. then others will say it was you, not God who made me rich.

Chapter 15:1 "I am your shield and your exceeding great reward!"
(*I am He who wears the armour belt*).

Genesis 15:2-6 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." **4** Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." **5** He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **6** Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

"I am God who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land as your inheritance, and I shall make your children to be as numerous as the stars

in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore".. and Abraham looked at all the tribes of "ites" who filled that place, and "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness".

Genesis 15:7-20 ⁷ And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸ But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹ He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give^[a] this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

How will I know? (the cry of everyone's heart is.."how will I know, how can I be sure, on the basis of my past experience) **Abraham bring me a three year old heifer, a lamb and a dove..cut them in half and leave each half against the other..God passed by fire between the halves.. because God at that time had no blood, and God is in covenant with sinful man.. not until Jesus came. God confirmed the covenant! "To your descendants have I given this land..whoever is out there, I am giving it to you". God is a burning fire! "I am Almighty God.. walk before me and be blameless, and I will multiply you.." God gave him a new name.. Abram to 'Abraham'.. father of many nations. GOD SPEAKS TO US ANYTIME WE WANT TO CONFIRM ANYTHING HE HAS PROMISED US! Sarai becomes Sarah.. you are no longer who you used to be.. "I have made you NEW PEOPLE!" God keeps saying..**

Genesis 17:1-9 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. ² Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."

³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴ "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant as

an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

⁹Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.

THIS IS MY COVENANT WHICH YOU SHALL KEEP AND YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU!

God who has no weaknesses needs..firstly.. LOVE relationships.. and secondly God needs a human line through whom He can bring SALVATION by a Messiah who is God who comes in human flesh. You can't look at God the same way anymore! Both of us.. God and man shall keep this covenant!

God gets Abraham to confirm it with circumcision.. a seal not visible to everyone.. but “hidden”.. signifying the unseen cutting of the heart for Jesus. (see Romans) ¹⁰This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

GOD TESTS ABRAHAM AS TO HIS COMMITMENT TO IT

Genesis 22:1-18 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ²He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” ³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” ⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸Abraham said,

“God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹²He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place, (“Jehovah Jireh) “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” ¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, **because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,** ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **BECAUSE YOU HAVE OBEYED MY VOICE.**”

Abraham is tested on the principle that everything he has belongs to God; and everything God has is for him. Then God goes further and asks for Isaac to be made a burnt sacrifice.. Abraham takes Isaac his son born when Abram was 100 years of age.. and tells the servants to stay behind, and he and Isaac take the wood.. and “go yonder to worship.. and we shall return *again*”. Isaac enquires as to where the sacrifice is.. and Abraham speaks out one of the Bible's greatest prophecies.. **'GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF A LAMB'**.. and He does.. just as Abram is about to light the burnt-offering fire with Isaac as the Offering. (*Abraham already believes that whatever happens to Isaac, he is going to live*) Isaac and he stop at Mt. Moriah (777 meters above sea- level.. which is the height of Golgotha where Jesus the Lamb died. Note the triple 7's.. 7 is the number where God seals completion. Here God provided His own Son.. The Lamb of God! This numerology is the Godhead sealing Completion.. for on The Cross Jesus, God's Lamb cried out.. “the debt is completely paid” (*Gk. 'tetelestai'*)

Some questions we need to be able to answer:

1. What does God's Covenant with Abraham say to you about your Covenant

with God through Jesus?... "much more meaningful than thought"

2. What is your part in this Eternal Covenant God has made with you through His Son? Receive Christ.. To keep it... Obedience... love... Holy Spirit.. planted in His House..planted in the river of the Spirit and Word..etc
3. What is God's part in this Eternal Blood Covenant He has made with you through His Son?.. To keep it.. Mercy.. Grace..Provide..Protect..Love
4. List some of the Blessings are you under.. Eternal Life.. sin, satan and sickness power destroyed.. Jesus 'Will' leaves everything to me..part of His "visible" Body
5. What curses will come upon you if you break it?.. Hell
6. How will you celebrate Jesus' Covenant? .. receive the bread and wine.. and give him His provision portion back to Him.. invite the lost..etc.

Father.. I come to you in the Covenant Name of Jesus. Open my eyes to see the way in which our Covenant relationship touches every part of me."

C. HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

What comes to mind when you hear that phrase? You may have experienced something in Church life that you considered healthy. You may have also experienced something you considered unhealthy.

Your Church Experience

List some of your Church Life experiences which were healthy and unhealthy.

Healthy

Unhealthy

(Discuss these)

While there is no perfect Church.. there are dimensions of health that are necessary for a Church to be Healthy. Let's start with ..

1. Understanding True Worship

This begins with individuals having a real hunger for more of God. God is also hungry for people who will worship 'in Spirit, and in Truth'

John 4:23-24 "Yet a time is coming, and now is here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. Father constantly looks for people like this. Why? Because He is Spirit.. and so His worshippers

must worship in the Spirit and in Truth".

There are so many forms of fleshly and worldly worship, but these count with Him for nothing.

2. True Worship brings many changes, which will include:

a) Kinds of Deliverance from God from demons, sin, sickness and oppression: (see 2 Chronicles 20:22; Acts 16:25-26)

illustration: I came across the most wretched alcoholic I have ever seen in my life. Rotting bread, wet with spilt alcohol moulded through the passage-way, in this permanently darkened 'home'. His wife and children had departed years before. The furniture went with them. The house was devoid. I shaded my eyes to see him, and he could hardly talk, cowering in the blackness. I asked him if he wanted to stay the same or have Jesus give him a new life. He wanted a new life. I knew that this man would be an enormous 'project' for any Pastor. Suddenly the Holy Spirit said to me.. "Ask him if you can come back and worship the Lord.. singing.. 'there is Power in the Blood' ". He replied "Yes". I came back with my guitar and a couple of saints, and we initially sat on beer-crates.. and then we began to sing.. Holy Spirit came upon him; and as we sang; a massive miracle of deliverance was taking place. Body contorted, twitching, twisting, screaming, pitching.. the demons fled. Finally he was free.. repented of his sins.. and received Christ. Thirty seven years later he is still planted in the House of the Lord.. sane..coherent.. and loves God! O Lord our Lord.. there is Power in Holy Spirit Praise and worship.

Psalms 103:1: "With all that I am, I will praise You Lord".

b) It brings the release of Joy: "In the presence of the Lord, there is joy forever more." (Psalms 16:11)

Psalms 105:43 "The Lord has led forth His people with joy, and His chosen ones with singing."

Psalms 71:23 "My lips will shout for joy, when I praise to You- I whom You have redeemed."

c) It brings revelation of God's Will:

Acts 13:2 "While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said.. 'Set apart for Me, Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them to.' "

3. What hampers True Worship?

Unconfessed, and unrepented of sin. It doesn't stop God being Faithful, it stops

us being released as The Temple of the Holy Spirit.

4. What promotes worship in Truth?

Building your life around praising and worshipping Him, all the day long, in every way for everything you can. It is good to sing and shout out loud when it is possible. Sometimes we have to be released from our own inhibitions. The Spirit of God arises within us, and our life becomes a celebration.

Psalm 103.22 "Praise the Lord, everything He has created, everything in all His Kingdom".

5. Corporate Worship:

a) Get ready and prepared to meet King Jesus together:

1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who brought you out of darkness into His glorious light.

Destress, and let everything fall off you. You're with King Jesus and Father's Family now.. it's time to focus on Him. Let the Holy Spirit anoint you afresh, as you get ready for Him to fill your mouth with Praise and Worship.

b) When you gather testify of His mighty acts of 'loving-kindness' you have encountered.

6. An environment that releases True Worship:

- A pre-service Prayer Meeting
- A people taught properly about worship, with continued reinforcement.
- The Worship Team led by a Holy Spirit gifted Psalmist who can bring forth songs from the Lord any time
- A Worship Team who know the difference between entertaining and worshipping.
- Aim for awesome corporate worship.. and you'll hit it more frequently.
- The Worship leader and Pastor are totally committed to seeking the will of God through the Holy Spirit
- Singers who are ready to bring forth anointed songs
- An expectation that God will do mighty things by His Spirit through worship
- Be ready for it to go into Healing, Celebration, Intercession, Warfare.. or anywhere that Holy Spirit leads, to bring transformation.
- MAKE SURE ABOVE ALL ELSE THAT THE LORD IS EXALTED.
- Each Church is unique.
- Worship can take place at any time through the Communion, the proclamation of the Word, children's time.. Offering etc.

- On rare occasions a song may be sung over someone in the Congregation as a comfort and inspiration.
- All the sons of God should present themselves as a living sacrifice. (See Romans 12:1-2)
- NOTE: There will always be a portion of people, even in the most True Worship who get nothing out of it; because they haven't given wholeheartedly themselves, or they are unwell.

PREPARING TO GROW AS A WORSHIPPER

(James 1:22)

1. Spend time before you come to The House of the Lord as individuals already having worshipped.
2. Examine how you felt before and after corporate worship.
3. Tell others what it has done for you, and Glorify the Lord.

LESSON TWO

PRAYING TOGETHER

The spiritual health of a congregation of believers is a direct reflection of the prayer life of the group. In this lesson we will explore how we can effectively pray together and see the mighty hand of God move on our behalf and for the furtherance of His Kingdom.

A House of Prayer

Jesus Christ feels strongly about prayer in God's house. He describes what we should be doing in our churches in regard to prayer. He reveals His intentions for us praying together in the following account:

Matthew 21 :12-13 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written, " He said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

Temple Cleansing

Jesus drives money changers from the court.

This was the second time Jesus drove the moneychangers and merchants from the court of the Gentiles in the temple. The moneychangers exchanged international currency into the special temple coins -- the only medium of exchange the merchants would accept for

purchasing the sacrificial animals. Both the moneychangers and merchants were shamelessly taking advantage of the pilgrims who had travelled to Jerusalem to pray and to worship God. By setting up their booths in the court of the Gentiles, they were crowding out those who were there to worship.

Think of this scene: Jesus, who is being called the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, goes into the temple and apparently single-handedly drives all of these people from their dishonest commerce. His face must have been extremely grim and flushed with adrenaline as He turned the tables and benches over and drove them out. He then quoted from Isaiah.

I saiah 56:6-7 "And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve Him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship Him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My covenant-- these I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations".

Yes, Jesus feels strongly that the Church is to be a House of Prayer.

Corporate Prayer in the Early Church

Many people praying.

The Bible says the early church joined together constantly in prayer. We will now see what a prominent place corporate prayer played in the church as it was birthed and in subsequent years as recorded in the book of Acts. After Jesus was taken up to Heaven, the apostles and others were "all joined together constantly in prayer."

Acts 1:12-14 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

All together praying.

Ten days after Jesus' ascension, the festival of Pentecost was being celebrated and the believers were all together in one place. Acts 1:15 says the believers numbered about 120. An astonishing thing happened.

Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Prayer caused a mass revival.

All the foreigners were astounded. United corporate prayer preceded the giving of the Holy

Spirit in a dramatic demonstration of power and the supernatural baptism of the Holy Spirit which resulted in believers speaking in tongues (languages) they had not learned. The foreigners who were in Jerusalem for the festival were astounded to hear these unlearned people praising God in various languages. It caused such a stir that Peter seized the occasion and preached a masterful sermon. Those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3,000 were added to their number that day. Glory to God!

Life in the New Church

Next we are told what the believers did.

- They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.
- Fellowship.
- Breaking of bread.
- Prayer.
- Met together in the temple courts every day.
- Praised God.
- Saw that all needs were met.

Results were obvious.

The results of the above: They enjoyed the favour of all the people, and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Miracle Happens on the Way to Prayer

Acts 3:1-10 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer- at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then ~~Peter said, "Look at us!"~~ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ~~Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.~~ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Three prayer meetings a day.

Notice that Peter and John were going to pray at the temple. (Jews prayed three times a day: 9:00 am, 3:00 pm, and evening/sunset.) On their way, this notable miracle took place and a well known crippled man was healed. Again, Peter grasps the opportunity to preach to the assembled crowd (Acts 3: 11-12). The priests, captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees seized Peter and John and put them in jail. However:

Acts 4:4 ...many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

Prayer leads to courage.

The next day Peter and John were taken before the Sanhedrin and again Peter preached a powerful message. Then in Verse 13 it says, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." But there stood the healed man. What could they say?

Acts 4: 18-22 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

Give an example of when you acquired courage or boldness through prayer.



Example:

The Believer's Prayer

On their release, Peter and John went back to the believers and told them all that had happened to them. We should follow their example by also raising our voices together in prayer!

Acts 4:24-31 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and

perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.
" After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Powerful things were happening.

Notice all the powerful things that were happening when they were in one accord and praying. On the Day of Pentecost suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from Heaven and filled the whole house, and what seemed like tongues of fire rested on each of them. Now the place where they were meeting and praying was shaken! The result: They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.

The same power is for today.

One cannot help but wonder if we would not experience the same manifestations of power if we were to have the same united corporate prayer. There seems to be a spiritual principle of "one putting a thousand to flight; and two, ten thousand."

Deuteronomy 32:30-31 How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up? For their rock is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede.

Give an example of when you experienced the power of God during or after prayer.



The Church Continues to Grow

As the believers continued in prayer, worship, fellowship, and being taught, mighty things happened that brought awe and a wholesome reverence upon the people. In Acts 5 we learn what happened to Ananias and his wife Sapphira who lied to the apostles, while in reality they were lying to the Holy Spirit, and were struck dead. Yet people continued to come to the Lord daily and the church grew. The apostles were performing miraculous signs and wonders among the people. Crowds gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and demonized, and all of them were healed.

The apostles were persecuted.

Prayer opens the way for God to mightily reveal Himself. This will often cause the religious community to take notice. It is not uncommon for the religious people to become jealous of prayer groups that are seeing marvelous things happen. We should not be surprised when we begin to be persecuted for supernatural moves of God resulting from praying together.

Acts 5:17-21 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin-- the full assembly of the elders of Israel-- and sent to the jail for the apostles.

An angel shows up.

Although the scripture does not state they were praying, it is safe to assume that the believers as well as the apostles were in prayer. And an angel shows up! Upon discovering that the apostles were gone, but the jail was still securely locked and the soldiers were standing guard, the scripture says "the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this." Can you imagine just how puzzled they were?! The captain and his officers went to the temple and brought them before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body. After Peter and the apostles preach Jesus Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, repentance, and forgiveness of sins, these religious leaders were ready to kill them.

God fights for us.

When we pray together as a church, it will often result in the Lord fighting our battles for us. Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people, gave his famous speech that ended with, 'but if it (the apostles' purpose and activity) is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.' He persuaded them. They then called the apostles in and had them flogged, ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Can you imagine the fear and frustration these unsaved Jewish leaders were experiencing? Their power was slipping away; they were losing control. How do you fight against these men, who after being severely beaten, leave rejoicing?!

Acts 5:41-42 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

Prayer Continues to be a Priority

So the church continued on -- never stopping with the teaching, preaching, fellowship, and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. The success, of course, brought administrative and organization challenges. In Acts 6 we see how and why.

Acts 6:3-4 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Apostles delegate so they can pray and preach.

The apostles were not going to allow anything, even good works toward the widows, to keep them from prayer and ministry of the Word. If only leaders in the church today were to follow this biblical example of church life! If they could (or would) delegate to responsible people in the church and give themselves to prayer, we would likely see more "Book of Acts" activity.



Give an example of when you determined prayer to be a high priority for your life.

Example:

LESSON THREE: DISCERNING THE BODY OF CHRIST

Main Scripture: John 15:1-9 (KJV)

15.1 " I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

- "True" is compared to "false". Other Old Testament "vines" or "pleasant plantings" which Father God had planted as Israel's priestly ministries had produced bitter fruit. (*Isaiah 65:1ff*) They needed a perfect role model, and Jesus came and lived this as The True Vine; and **He is that with us right now!**
- The Vine (The Blood of a living sacrifice) and The olive (The Holy Spirit Anointed) in the natural sense were Israel's two main symbols of worldly prosperity. Their spiritual meaning was: The Vine represented spiritual prosperity in sacrificial, corporate, living service to God and neighbour; while the olive tree speaks of Israel as a nation under God's Spirit. Unfortunately Israel in their unbelief ignored the more important spiritual states God required, and lived for their belly.
- The Vine in nature produces the "fruit of the vine" which is Grapejuice/wine, and Jesus said that spiritually it represented Him serving a sinful world as The True Vine... producing His own Blood, for the

destruction of the sin of mankind.. which we are commanded to celebrate in Communion (*weekly*).

- The Blood of Jesus represents the Covenant which He made with Father God for us to be "in them, and Them in us"..as ONE
- Father is the Gardener/Vinedresser.. He is continually watching over Jesus and us.. so that Jesus and He are glorified through our fruitfulness..by us reproducing Jesus lifestyle, words and works. Father constantly manages us both individually and corporately; and promotes our ability to show forth the very best fruit of Jesus, moment by moment.

²Every branch in me that bears not fruit He takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he trims it back, that it may bring forth more fruit.

- Jesus and all believers growing in Him are One Spirit... joined to Him like branches to The one Vine.. you can't see where one branch stops and the vine starts.. as it is with all.
- Every Vine has many, many branches.. and each one is a 'fruiting' branch. Even poor quality natural vines have all their branches bring forth fruit; but The True Vine's every branch is made to be fruitful. Therefore 'The Branches' are The Church, which is Jesus' Body.. and we as Believers are all alive in Him, and drink from the very same Spirit all together at once; who is Christ.
- Spirit-Life flows from Jesus through us.. we must familiarise ourselves with this amazing state, and learn to live in it totally naturally and normally , like a fish lives in water.
- Jesus "fruit" is obvious... (Acts 10:38) "God anointed Jesus Christ of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and Power, and He went about doing good and healing those who were oppressed by Satan because God was with Him.." so, get Anointed each day, and **be available to work the works of God** with anyone, anywhere, anytime! There are hundreds of ways people have suffered the oppression of Satan, and we are here to see what's happened, and bring healing to them.."Heal the sick!".. Jesus commands us.
- **Believers who are unavailable for Jesus, and ignore the promptings of Father God**, and just keep on living out of the natural will bring forth the fruit of man, which is no different to every unbeliever, therefore they won't bring forth fruit to build Christ's Kingdom.. and so they are already living a life "cut-off" from their real purpose by their own choices.. and so for God to "cut them off".. is simply to finish what they have already started. **They are already breaking the covenant relationship! The only result of breaking the Covenant is death, and separation from The Vine AND all the Branches.**
- The fruit comes through being a "living-sacrifice". The Blood of Jesus symbolises for us that he who saves his life shall lose it, but he who gives his life to serve Jesus daily, shall find it. (Luke 9:24,25)

³Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

- **Ah the pure and holy beauty of Jesus!** His beautiful Spirit in us, changes

us into His beauty..for He promises.."I make all things beautiful in My time" (*Ecclesiastes 3:11*) You are destined to have "A Beautiful Life"!

- Ah! The cleanness of those continually washed by the study and application of Jesus' Words! His every Word saturated with His Spirit is Divinely, Eternally alive, just waiting to be planted in us, so that we bring 'ever-increasing' liberty and freedom to ourselves and to our neighbour.
- Jesus is 'The Word' (John 1:1).. 'The Logos' (GK) whose words (*logoi*) are 'Spirit' and 'Life'.. "The Word" is not only in us, but as the sap flows from The Vine through each branch.. Jesus' Spirit is flowing through us.. we are a 'river', not a 'lagoon'. Live in the 'flow' of Christ's Spirit.
- Through Calvary's Covenant..Jesus has given you everything that He has..you are now 100% "righteous" and clean of sin, and every manner of uncleanness of heart, hands and lips. A new Creation.. a new being no less! Together we form a **new**, holy nation.
- The clean are as bold as a lion for Jesus.
- Jesus is also 'The Righteous Branch' (Jeremiah 23:5) for Father God, and did all his Father's commands.. and so He is now both The True Vine, and lived (*waiting for Father's commands to Him*) as The Righteous Branch (*role*) as our role-model. We are now the righteous branches, who must copy Jesus, and obey our Father's commands. **Keep listening for His promptings..what do you want me(us) to say Lord? Where do you want me(us) to go to now? Who do you want me(us) to pray for? What do you want me(us) to do for them Lord?**

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

- Keeping your thoughts fixed on Jesus all the day long will mean that you will live in Him; and you will be waiting, and watching as a true servant for The Master's next command.. and jumping to obey it, even better if its with your fellow believers. With God two or more are better than one!.."Where 2 or 3 are gathered together, In My Name, here I am in the midst of you." (*Matthew 18:20*)
- Two become ONE, and live and move as One.."Its no longer I but Christ that lives in me." (*Galatians 2:20*)

⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches: He that lives in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.

- This is an incredibly glorious statement of The Covenant relationship.."he who lives in Me, and I in him"
- The fruit isn't natural fruit like that of an apple; it is spiritual, which involves doing everything in this daily world as unto the Lord..that will bring forth much fruit, which will last "forever", and on that day when all our works are tried by fire they shall remain as jewels of Christ's work done through us.. So, copy those who have Kingdom Fruit coming from their life.. listen to their passion, understand their motivation..hear their Love for Jesus.. hear the Word flowing from their heart.. see their

compassion for the lost and oppressed. Healthy churches are healthy in direct proportion to the prayer they put in; the Love of God they manifest; and their passion for Christ and His Kingdom.

- We can do nothing to build the Kingdom of God, unless it is done through Jesus' Name. God insists that His Son be glorified, by making Him the sole 'door' and 'authority' for every obedient work. Jesus is glorified every time we do a work whether great or small in His Name.. and this brings Glory to the Father.

⁶If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

- Judas was in a Covenant relationship with Jesus. When he betrayed Jesus, he removed himself from that Covenant, **and he knew that the penalty to break the Covenant was death..** and immediately he died spiritually. "Ichabod".. the Spirit has departed! He was left with his old dead spirit, and he knew it.. He was spiritually dead, and he went out and physically killed himself. He was both spiritually dead, and eternally dead... and had only the "fires" waiting for him.

⁷If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

- A condition (*amongst many such Promises*) that Jesus has placed upon His part of The Covenant is.. "if you are in Me, and I am in you, and you are living according to My spoken and written directions.. you will ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you." **Have faith in Him you saint, and you Church! Try it until it becomes a lifestyle!**
- "You don't receive from God either because you don't ask, or you have asked amiss". (James 4:3) When Believers are living out of the flow of Christ's Spirit within, and their existing, growing knowledge of The Word, they will always ask according to the Will of God, because the Holy Spirit and The Word will bear witness to their request being OK. They'll receive from God!!

⁸Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

- Jesus talks about "people", not about a person. God didn't speak about an Israelite, He spoke about His Family called Israel. He doesn't talk about a 'branch' unless it is to talk about it being removed.. like Ananias and Sapphira.. He talks in the plural of "branches".. His "branches on The Vine"
- How ludicrous it is for Christ "The True Vine" to command us to go to His 'Lord's House' each week, and for 'the Branches' to remove themselves from the 'True Vine' for that day.. knowing that our highest purpose is not achieved individually but as His Visible Body! Repent of your sin; remove yourself from your ignorance, arbitrary Branch and flow with Christ's Spirit and your fellow-saints in One Spirit on 'The Lord's Day'.. so that

together we may say..“Thou Mighty Christ..how can we serve both Your purposes and each other, together today?”

- John 17:21-22..“Father I pray that they may be One, as You and I are One.. that they may be One with us, and with each other, and they might Love each other, as I have loved them.. that the world might believe that I have come”
- It's not just about individual branches doing their daily service to God; it is more about **The Branches work together as “The Church Visible Body” Team bearing much fruit corporately.** What does He want us all to do together? First of all He wants us to throw away our 'religious', and 'self-centred', individual independence, to become both being and acting together as The Body of Christ! Jesus' first Church were the disciples..and we are a continuation of that!! We value each other and each other's role, and work hard together to build The Kingdom of God. God endorses working in unity with other Believers! “If any two of you agree on Earth as touching anything, it shall be done for you by your Father who is Heaven”. “One will chase 1000, two will chase 10,000”. It's time to correctly discern The Body, and your role within the Body; and get your eyes of yourself or someone else, and do what He shows you to do. “Paul sows, Apollos waters, and God gives the increase”. **Discern The Body of Christ correctly or else you may become sick and die.** (1 Corinthians 11:29) The opposite is also true; that if you discern The Body correctly you shall have life and health.
- The only competition we truthfully should experience as “disciples” is with Satan and Hell.. and we intend to crush him; plunder that, and populate Heaven.
- **OUR FRUIT: IS TO HELP PREPARE THE BRIDE FOR ETERNITY!**

⁹ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: you must continue in My love.

- Let the “hesed”.. the loving, merciful compassion of our Father that flows from Christ's Spirit through us, always be the highest character strength, and emotional state.. in which we practice constantly living and moving and having our being. “In Love, serve one another”

Prayer: “O Jesus, my beautiful Lord and my Master, let me not look for help so much as to help; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive.. in pardoning that we are pardoned.. and in dying, we are born to Eternal Life..Amen”.

LESSON FOUR

SERVE

TOGETHER

Jesus Christ said He came to serve, not to be served . In this lesson we will explore how we, the church, can serve God, each other, and the world in which we live.

Jesus Teaches about Serving Others

Matthew 20:-25-28 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."¹¹

The path to servanthood.

In the incident preceding the above scripture, James and John's mother requested special favour for her sons. When the other ten disciples heard of the request, they were indignant with the two brothers. Then Jesus replies with a beautiful description of His own servant hood. We see Him still teaching this lesson on His last night with them.

John 13:1-5, 12-17 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God; so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him... When He had finished washing their feet, He put on His clothes and returned to His place. ¹¹ "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Model servant.

Jesus is our model servant. Washing their feet had to make the disciples tremendously uncomfortable, yet they were profoundly impacted by His humble act. If God in the flesh would serve in this manner, how much more should we, His followers, be willing to serve others. Jesus was the perfect servant-leader.

Foot Washing

A humbling experience.

Have you ever attended a foot washing ceremony? The authors have on several occasions, and it is a very humbling experience. It is normally done with the men in one room and the women in another. We had teaching previous to the actual ministry time. The leaders began by taking basins of water and towels and going to individuals, kneeling down, and washing their feet. They would pray for the person and express gratitude for their life. If there was any unforgiveness in the room, the precious presence of the Holy Spirit soon compelled the offended parties to reconcile. There is a softening, humbling atmosphere created by this unusual experience. Afterwards, there is a greater appreciation of what transpired when Jesus actually washed His friends' feet that fateful night.

Have you ever experienced foot-washing in a Church Service?

God's Ways Are Not Our Ways

Matthew 23: 11-12 The greatest among you will be your servant. For
whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

He is changing us.

Let's face it. We all like being served. That is our selfish fallen nature. It craves power, status, wealth, admiration, and to be waited on hand and foot. When we become Christians, we begin to see that God's ways are not our ways. And the battle is on! Our only hope of overcoming this selfish, self-serving nature is by the power of the Holy Spirit energizing us to do right. When we first learn of the humble way our Saviour served mankind while on earth, we are dumb struck with how unlike Him we are. Then we read about His closest companions, Peter, James, and John, and we take heart because we see their human frailties and we can identify with them. We see them grow from being stubborn, self-willed, power grabbing, uncouth Galileans to tremendous men of God who served their generation and then were martyred for their faithfulness to their King. There is hope for us also!

The Body of Christ

Romans 12:4-8 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27-31 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. . .

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all

speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

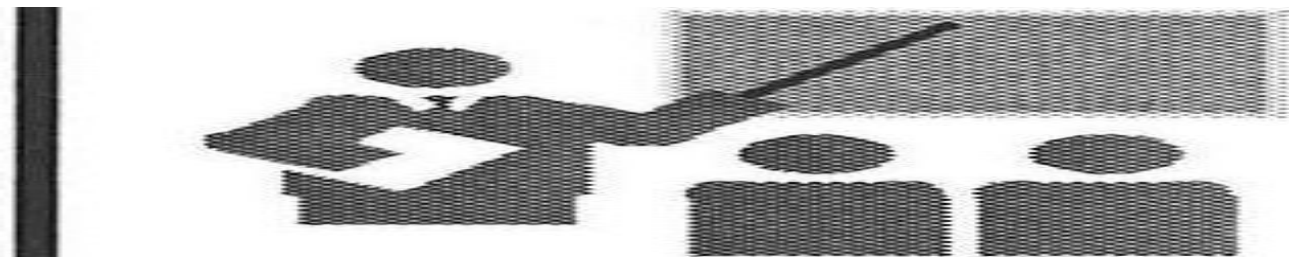
We serve in love.

It is clear from the Word that every Christian is a part of this mystical, yet real, body of Christ. Part of our wonderful journey is discovering just what particular part we are and how we are to best serve our Lord's body. One thing we know for sure is that however we are gifted and equipped to serve, it must be in love or it is worthless.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Discover where to serve at church.

Once believers discover who they are and can articulate what they feel called to do and what their passions are, then it should be easy to match up who they are with available ministry opportunities. Larger churches even have data bases or posted lists of their service opportunities. What a wonderful way to facilitate meaningful service. It then explains why an introvert with the gift of helps agonizes in an assignment as a greeter, but excels and is energized behind the scenes assisting in a multitude of ways.



Faithful Servants

Jesus had much to say about the importance of being faithful servants. When teaching about the final judgment, He says the following:

Matthew 25:37-46 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do

for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

SERVING OTHERS

Obviously, serving others is an important part of our walk in Christ. Let's look at some of the ways we are to serve those around us.

Your family at home.

This is most often where we first learn to serve. If we were not raised in a loving, serving home, it may require some major attitude adjustments as we begin to model after Jesus. The family is often the pressure cooker where we see just how selfish and dysfunctional we really are.

1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.



Serve Our Families

Action: What are some of the ways you are serving or can serve in your home or family? 1.

2.

3.

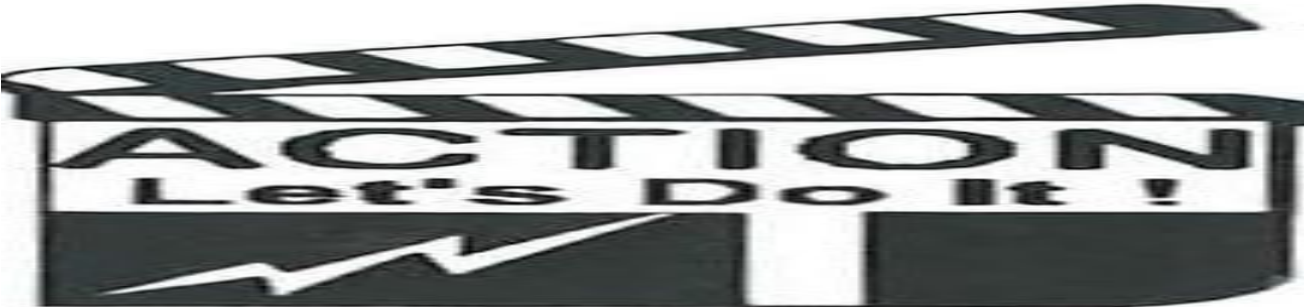
James
1:22

In your church.

Every believer should be a part of a vital local church, a place to receive and a place to give. It is not scriptural to be a lone ranger or to just be an observer. Much has been written about the consumer mentality that many North American Christians have developed. These Christians shop around for the best spiritual deal in town, partake of a little here and there, always centered on self and having their own needs met. The emptiness they are craving to fill can only be satisfied by committing to a congregation, by serving and giving of one's self.

The 20/80 principle.

As a practical matter, if every believer would diligently seek to discover their own personal mission, or assignment and faithfully serve in that capacity, our congregations would flourish. Instead, we have the 20/80 principle over and over again. Twenty percent of the church does eighty percent of the serving; thirty percent does the remaining twenty percent; and fifty percent does absolutely nothing! As student ministers, you must be numbered in the faithful twenty percent.



Serve in Your Church

Are you serving in your church now? YES NO

Are there other ways God may be leading you to serve? List the ways and discuss them with your pastor or ministry leader.

James 1 :22

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the marketplace.

There are a multitude of ways we can serve the people in our work place or the businesses we frequent. Here are a few:

- Teachers: before work or lunch time Bible studies.
- Teachers: start a brown-bag book discussion group.
- Intercessors: organize before work or lunchtime prayer meetings.
- Encouragers: morning, noon, and night, every day, to whomever needs it.
- Helps: assist struggling single moms by setting up a free daycare program at work.
- Helps: assist the company or neighborhood youth sports program.
- Helps: assist the community day camps or summer youth camp programs.
- Helps: assist your company to adopt a highway cleanup program.
- Helps: set up a "free coffee" outreach at an interstate freeway rest stop.



In your neighbourhood.

In North America many of our lifestyles are so busy we don't even know our neighbours, much less have an opportunity to speak into their lives. Like anything else, if it becomes a priority, we will find time. Again, there are many ways we can reach out.

- Administration: Host a "disaster preparedness" meeting. Distribute literature to your neighbourhood.
- Hospitality: Host a neighbourhood "meet your neighbours" barbecue.
- Helps: Offer to baby-sit, mow a lawn, or run an errand if you learn someone is ill.
- Evangelism: Invite your neighbours to a church or church-related activity.
- Hospitality: Invite someone over or deliver a simple home-cooked meal.
- Leadership: Become a "get out to vote" advocate in your neighbourhood. Vote in the next election...



Serve in Your Neighbourhood

Are you serving people in your neighbourhood?	YES	NO	How?
1.			
2.			
James 1:22 3.			

There are some effective ministries working with the inner-city communities. They are overwhelmed with a lack of ministers and resources. If you are called to this arena, seek out

those who are already doing a work and join them. Perhaps God will lead you to head up a ministry of people with like vision in your church. Opportunities are numerous. To name a few:

- Teaching: Be a tutor to underprivileged kids.
- Mercy: Join a team that provides meals, clothing, shoes, or blankets to homeless people.
- Evangelism: Join street witnessing teams. Provide street music for free.
- Helps: Help disadvantaged youth find part-time jobs. Teach them leadership skills.
- Craftsmanship: Join a city rehabilitation project. Help fix up a neighbourhood.
- Administration: Assist in the formation of an inner city youth sports team.
- Teaching: Teach an adult literacy program.
- Pastoring: Do young adult career counselling.
- Counselling: Conduct free counselling and practical living advice.



James
1:22

Serve in the Inner City

Are you or would you like to serve in the inner city? YES NO How?

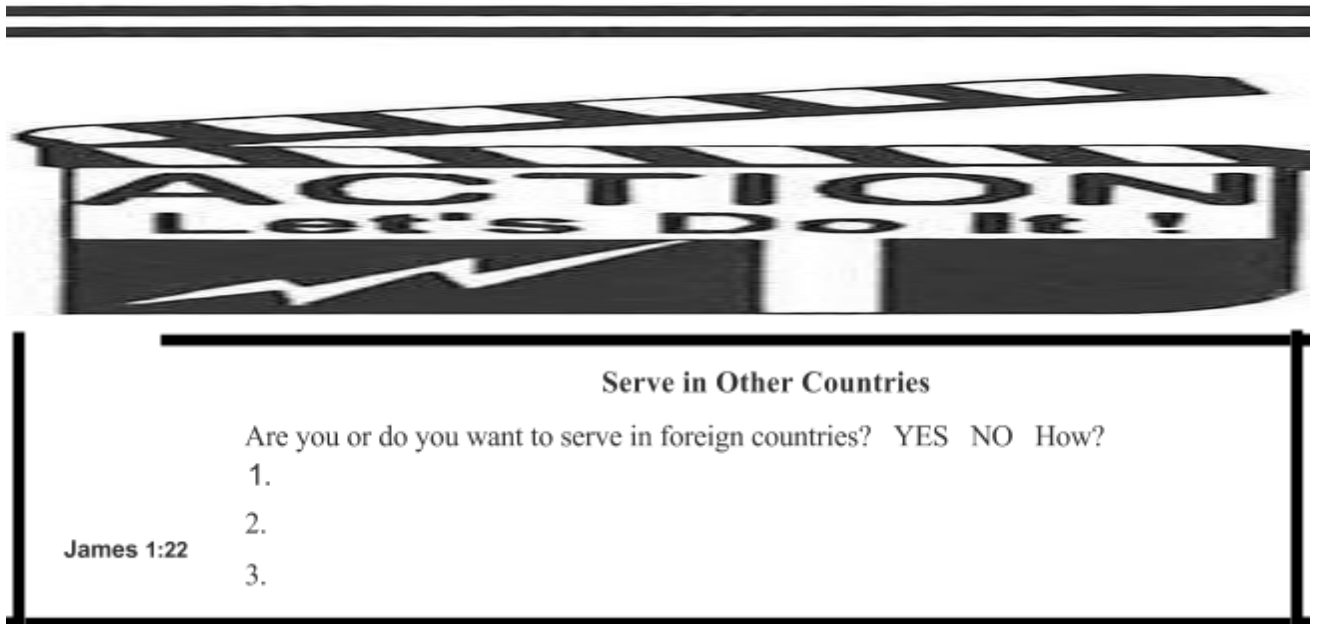
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Other countries.

The need for ministry in other countries is overwhelming. There are a vast variety of ways to participate. A short trip with a mission team is usually the best way to enter this type of ministry. The headquarters of the MTCs offer a yearly selection of short-term ministry trip destinations. MTC trips are primarily for Bible teaching, leadership training and evangelism. MTC can recommend various agencies or churches that are offering short-term trips. Here are a few types of trips offered by various churches and organizations:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Teaching | • Music evangelism |
| • Preaching | • Youth camps |
| • Construction | • English as a second language |
| • Medical services | • Prayer outreaches |

- Evangelism



Serve by starting a Ministry Training Center (MTC).

If you have been gifted with teaching ability and have completed all the MTC requirements, perhaps the Lord will call you to work towards/ or continue an MTC in your church. If your pastor is interested in the concept, we would be happy to talk with him or her about the possibilities. To start an MTC:

- Attend all the MTC classes and complete the study of the training manuals.
- Complete all the MTC exams and turn in for grading; complete all in-class assignments.
- Complete the marketplace assignments.
- Acquire the MTC diploma for ministry.
- Secure the written recommendation of the MTC leadership.
- Secure the written recommendation of your pastor.
- Complete the MTC Instructor Training Intensive class.
- Go do it.

If so, do you want to facilitate beginning an MTC at your church? Y N How?

1.

2.

3.

Jesus, our model.

Jesus modelled beautiful servant hood for us, even to the lowly task of washing the disciples' feet. Let us aspire to be like Him and resist our own in-bred selfish tendencies. To lovingly serve others is to be like Him. We don't have to be a Mother Teresa to be a faithful servant. We just need to do what He calls us to do and for which He has fully equipped us.

We Are Commanded to Serve

Jesus gave us a new command to love one another. You cannot love others unless you serve them. Loving and serving are a twosome. They are inseparable. So, in order to obey His command to love others, we must serve them. Where? Wherever He has placed us. So, let's go do it!

I Will Serve Others!

The three primary areas in which I can and will serve are:

James 1:22

1. In my church:

2. =

3. =

LESSON FIVE

GIVE TOGETHER

Jesus Christ said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Giving together as a corporate body is the foundation whereby the Kingdom of God is advanced. When we discover the joy of participating in the advancement of spreading the Gospel, we are changed. Giving together multiplies the progression of the local church where we serve. Jesus said as we give, more would be given to us. In this lesson we will discover what this truly means.

It Is More Blessed to Give than to Receive

The great Apostle Paul is a selfless model for us to consider. In his farewell to the Ephesians elders recorded in Acts 20 he tells them he has not coveted anyone's silver, gold, or clothing, but that he worked and supplied his own needs and those of his companions. Then he quoted a very famous saying of our Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Acts 20:32-35 Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Paul put the work of the Lord first.

We see from the above scripture that Paul did whatever he needed to do to keep preaching the Gospel and building the church. That was his consuming desire. He had learned to be content - as long as he could do God's work. We, too, need to make our "assignment" from the Lord a high priority. What are some of the assignments we might have?

- Being godly parents.
- Being an effective marketplace believer.
- Teaching a class at church.
- Feeding the poor.
- Giving financial resources.



Do you give?

What are your primary ways of giving?

James 1:22 1.

2.

Sowing Generously and with Joy

Sowing and reaping is a concept we see all around us, whether it is planting seeds for vegetable or flower gardens ourselves or seeing vast wheat fields ready for harvest. Sow sparingly and you will reap sparingly; sow generously and reap a bountiful harvest. So it is in the spiritual dimension. If we sow generously of our love, resources, time, and gifts, we shall surely reap a wonderful harvest in God's kingdom -- a harvest of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

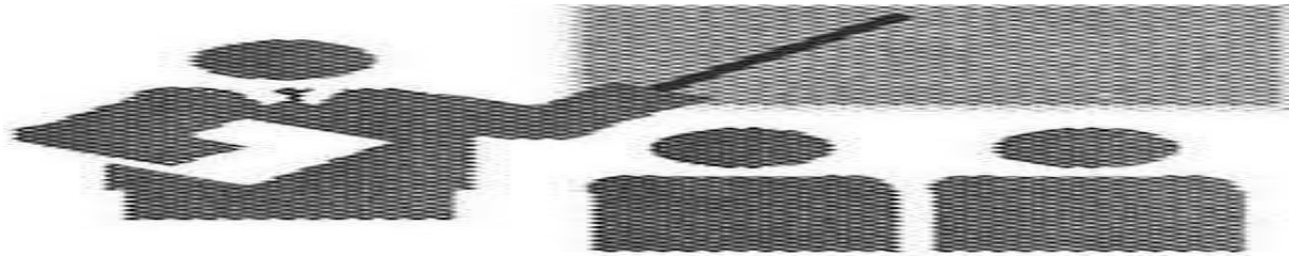
Giving with joy.

Yes, God loves a cheerful giver. He wants us to give out of love. The only way we can do this is by revelation of this truth deep within our spirits. By nature we are greedy and self-serving. But as the Holy Spirit gently works with us revealing the truth of God's will in this matter, we slowly begin to step out in faith and accept His challenge to:

Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the

floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Give an example of when you discovered tithing as a joyful response to God.



Example:

Generosity Results in Praise to God

When we live a giving lifestyle, it results in praise to God. Even unbelievers are favourably impressed when they see Christians giving to the poor and relieving the suffering of the unfortunate. How many other religions do you know that have missions or soup kitchens to care for the destitute homeless people?

2 Corinthians 9:12-13 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

Freely We Have Received; Freely Give

Jesus called the twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. He told them that freely they had received and freely they were to give. And it is no different today. As His followers, He has freely given to us: His Holy Spirit, salvation, forgiveness, eternal life, healing, peace, love, joy, His church, His Word, and a thousand other blessings. How can we withhold from our fellow man? Yes, freely we have received; let us be generous givers.

Matthew 10:1, 5-8 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

Just Giving of Our Money is Not Enough

We can give copious amounts of money but if our hearts' motives are wrong, it won't count for a thing. In fact, if we give all we possess to the poor and have not love, we gain nothing. Jesus said we should give a tithe, but not neglect justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Matthew 23:23-24 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

1 Corinthians 13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

We are being changed.

Jesus gave completely and totally of Himself -- even His own sinless life for us. And our Heavenly Father commands us to be like Him. When we look at ourselves, we are overwhelmed with how little of Jesus we see. Yet when we look around, we see the miracle of change that is taking place in those Christians we know. And if we are honest, we can see that we, too, are changing into His likeness -- ever so slowly it seems, yet it is happening.

Giving is Love in Action

When we truly love someone, we give of ourselves, our resources, and our time. It brings us joy to see that they are blessed and their needs are met. So it is with our giving as Christians. The greater revelation we experience of God's love towards us, the greater capacity we have for pouring out His love to others.

2 Corinthians 8:7-8 But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-- see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

Give an example of when you decided to excel in the grace of giving.



Example:

Sacrificial Giving is Admired by Jesus

God's economy is diametrically opposed to the world's economy. We see this clearly demonstrated when the poor little widow gave her two very small copper coins worth only a fraction of a penny, and Jesus said she had put more into the treasury than all the others. The others gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on. So we see in God's economy the value of a gift is not determined by the amount, but rather by the spirit and attitude in which it is given. For those of us who are struggling financially, let us take heart and give our pennies with love and gratitude. It is then we can look to the Lord to help us be wise in our finances so we can give even more.

Mark 12:41-43 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth: but she, out of her poverty, put in everything-- all she had to live on."

Summary.

We have thus far examined many scriptural references about the principles of giving and we learned:

- It is more blessed to give than receive.
- We are to sow generously and with joy.
- Generosity results in praise to God.
- Freely we have received; freely give.
- Just giving of our money is not enough.
- Giving is love in action.
- Sacrificial giving is admired by Jesus.

Now we will examine giving as an expression of the local church.

Corporate Giving

Tithing is good stewardship.

God's plan for financing the work of His Kingdom is brilliant! Each person gives 10% so it is proportionate. Then those who have been blessed are challenged to give offerings and alms above their tithes. If every believer followed God's principle, all churches would be debt free. We would have resources to feed and clothe the poor, to do missions, to educate; in other words, to be a blessing in this hurting world. We would likely not need public assistance programs any longer. Jesus Christ's concern for the lost sheep would be clearly demonstrated by the Church. Consider how the whole world, believers and non-believers, admired Mother Teresa.

American churches: 50 % give nothing.

In most churches in America, twenty percent of the congregation gives eighty percent of the offerings; thirty percent give the other twenty percent; fifty percent give nothing. In larger churches there may be as many as seventy-five percent that do not give--primarily because there is no perceived need and they have enough anonymity that they do not feel obligated.

God owns all of it.

Every good thing is a gift from God. All that we have belongs to Him. We should learn to be a gift to others, not only with our money but with our time and other resources. One measure of Christian maturity is obeying the principle of tithing. If we do not tithe we are running the risk of robbing God. How can we expect God to bless us financially if we are robbing from Him?

Malachi 3:8-10 Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' " "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse-- the whole nation of you-- because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, "says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."



Example:

New Testament examples.

The Christians in Jerusalem were being persecuted, and they were experiencing famine and extreme poverty. Paul was doing everything he could to relieve their suffering, including encouraging other believers elsewhere in the Roman Empire to give offerings to be sent to Jerusalem. He instructed the church at Corinth as follows:

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

Give to the poor.

In Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, he made reference to the "contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem."

Romans 15:25-27 Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews spiritual blessings, they owe it to

the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

Pattern emerges.

So we see a pattern emerge. Those who are blessed can assist those who are in need, and the Body of Christ lovingly cares for itself. We see evidence of beautiful sacrificial giving as recorded in one of Paul's letters to the Corinthian Church.

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

We are more effective as a group.

Obviously we have more resources when we give as a group, whether it is money or labour. When we pool our resources of money, gifts, and talents, we can accomplish much more than as an individual. This is how church buildings are built. This is how we can purchase good teaching materials for our children and build a better facility for our youth. This is how we can reach the world for Jesus Christ!

Making an impact.

One wonderful example is a group called I.M.P.A.C.T. which works out of a large church near Seattle Washington. These dedicated men, women, and children give sacrificially to build churches, housing, orphanages and other structures. They often provide the needed construction materials. When they go on a trip, even to foreign countries, they pay their own way. They have blessed thousands in many nations with this selfless giving of themselves. They also have a group that provides good drinking water by analyzing the needs and then drilling wells and teaching the indigenous people how to maintain the equipment. They now even have a well-drilling mechanism that can be broken down so they can backpack it to the most remote areas. These people are laying their lives down for others. I am sure our Lord Jesus is very pleased with their giving!

Give an example of how we can improve our impact for Jesus by pooling our resources.



**Exam
ple:**

Other ministries.

There are a multitude of other ministries, both inside and outside the local church which operate much like the I.M.P.A.C.T. group described above. Christians working together through a common goal and desire can make a tremendous difference in the lives of the unfortunate. Other such ministries could include:

- Feeding the hungry.
- Housing the homeless.
- Clothing the naked.
- Educating the illiterate.
- Freeing those in bondage.
- Taking the Gospel to unreached peoples .

Where do you want to give?
Do you want to give more?
Are you tithing the full 10% of your income?
Are you giving of your time and spiritual gifts?
Are you giving "offerings and alms" beyond the tithe? How?

LESSON SIX: LEARN TOGETHER

We never stop learning. The primary reason for the church gathered is to learn the ways of the Lord. Learning how to be a Christian is called discipleship. Once a believer has been discipled, the Bible says we should learn how to disciple someone else. We are not all teachers, but we are all called to disciple others by reason of our witness for Jesus Christ. Each of us will play a role. We will learn in this lesson that effective discipleship is a sure path to a balanced Christian life. Formal instruction is often the responsibility of mature leaders in the local church. However, all believers are to be an example of those who believe while being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. We will discover that learning how to be an effective Christian is not difficult. We will learn how to learn.

Learning the Ways of the Lord

Gain knowledge.

Knowledge is the key for abundant living. The abundant life in Christ can only be appropriated if we know where and how to gain this new life. Reading the life-giving pages

of the Bible is where we start. The scriptures have given the knowledge of the ways of the Lord for thousands of years. The many translations available have been the Holy Spirit's primary tool of blessing for every nation and most language groups of the world. The knowledge is there if only we will search for it.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Learn together.

Reading alone will not prepare us for the abundant life. We must be shown how to live the abundant life by someone who has it. This is best demonstrated when we learn together in the safety of the local church. Jesus led the way by showing us how to teach by example. This requires that we demonstrate what we teach in the company of others. Learning together is the most effective way of discipleship.

Job 34:4 Let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together what is good.

Discipleship Defined.

The Bible defines a disciple as a learner, one who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ. If we continue to learn about what the Lord expects from us, we will gain the abundant life promised by Him. But, there is a catch. You must "hold" to His teaching. That means we are to do the Word, not just hear it preached. It means we are to continue in, dwell in, endure in, remain in, stand in, and stay in the Word of God. You depart from being a disciple if you ignore obedience to the Word.

John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. "¹¹

Bear much fruit.

A disciple must bear fruit. We cannot call ourselves a disciple of Jesus Christ unless we conduct our lives in such a way that will produce noticeable fruit. We are thereby judged by how much fruit is being exhibited in our life. Love holds the highest priority. Then comes joy, peace, and patience. This is followed by exhibiting kindness to others in all goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we serve others while abiding and remaining in the love of Jesus Christ, we show ourselves to be true disciples. This is only possible by allowing the Word to have first place in our life.

John 15:7-8 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Teaching the Teachers

Each one makes one.

If every new Christian was taught to do what Jesus commissioned all of us to do, the world would be won by now. He said to every believer, "Go and make disciples." Jesus said His disciples are to be makers of disciples. New believers should be taught the basics of how to teach others. If each one could be shown how to teach or "make" their own disciple, we would advance the Kingdom very quickly.

Matthew 28: 18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always. . . ."

Just do what it says.

The best advice for becoming a learner is to become a doer. When we discover what the Bible says about changing our behaviour or how to treat others, we do what it says. This is done to please the Lord, not men. When new believers see mature believers doing what the Bible says, it is contagious. So, when we see in the Bible what to do, we should do it. Both the Old and New Testaments are full of strong encouragement to obey what the Holy Spirit reveals from the pages of the Bible. We need to obey these instructions from the Word by just doing what is revealed.

Deuteronomy 5:1 Moses summoned all Israel and said: "Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them."

Give an example of when you changed your behavior because you discovered what the Bible says about it.



**Exam
ple:**

Do what the teacher does.

Reading books is where we start. But it only produces head knowledge. This could be considered the least effective way to learn. Learning by listening to lectures or sermons is the next step. However, few disciples are produced by listening to good sermons. The best way we learn is by "trying out" or immediately "doing" what the teacher said to do and receiving an on-the-spot critique or feedback. This is best accomplished in small group gatherings. Immediate analysis and feedback should be given by the teacher to encourage our progress. This will accelerate our learning. The disciple is seeing, hearing, and feeling

during the learning process. All the physical senses are involved. Retention of principles and concepts is greatly enhanced. Confidence to keep improving is greatly advanced. Jesus did it this way.

Ministry Training At Its Best

The show-me principle.

Give a hungry man a fish and you will feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. Don't just tell me, SHOW ME! This is what made the *Ministry Training Centers* a success. It is the way believers are trained. They are given practical instruction that can be demonstrated in class by personal example. Student ministers are given immediate opportunity to do what the teacher is advocating. Extra time is given to "try out" the ministry technique being taught. Immediate feedback and discussion are offered to students to enhance practical application for the future. Jesus gave us this example. This is what Paul emphasized:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-
put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many
witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

The Sunday sermon.

Serious believers need more than the Sunday sermon. The myth of providing effective discipleship through lectures and sermons is why the church in the West has become ineffective. Television, video, the Internet, and high-tech multi-media are stealing the attention span of today's Christian. Sermons alone give no avenue of accountability. We can only hope that they are doing what is preached. How can we test their progress? This may work if your congregation is less than two-dozen people. Sermons alone will not change people.

Jesus was a living sermon.

Jesus took the early disciples with Him. He showed them what to do and turned them loose to do what He did. He then corrected their inexperience by bettering their ministry techniques. He taught them on the fly. In the West we listen and listen. But we are given no opportunity to be supervised and personally corrected as we try out the principles being taught. We need immediate feedback on how we are doing. Don't just tell me, show me! This means the preacher needs to be there as we step out and do the Word. Is it no wonder we are so slow to learn? We need to graduate from milk to the meat of the Word by practicing what we are hearing.

Hebrews 5:11-14 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you
are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need

someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Accelerated Discipleship Training

It does not take a long time to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Although maturity is a lifetime process, the authors think the basics can be mastered in about a year. This is based on a well thought out and committed combination of study and practice. The following suggested routine of deliberate discipleship is the ideal. It is only a suggestion for the serious student of the Bible; but, if achieved, it would result in accelerated discipleship, leading to abundant living.

An Ideal Situation

An ideal church situation for an effective discipleship strategy would most likely include:

- A mature pastor with a vision for both healthy discipleship training and evangelism.
- The availability of enough mature teachers for the various teaching assignments.
- A core of trained and committed believers ready and willing to learn how to lead others to Christ and into the discipleship process .
- Church leadership would need to be committed to evangelism and encouraging all members to minister freely at every opportunity.
- The discipling of all members would be achieved through a deliberate plan beginning with the Sunday sermons and finishing within the network of small groups. This is outlined below.

Start with the Sunday sermon.

This is where we start. Listening and taking notes during the weekly message from our teaching pastors are available to everyone. We are encouraged to apply the principles and do what they say. The messages are usually geared to most everyone in attendance and can be applied to our lives. The sermon is normally limited to a particular category of our life, giving three or four principles for us to apply that week. This is not enough for accelerated discipleship. There needs to be more opportunities for people to learn together.

Adult Sunday school is next... would this work in N.Z.?

Continuing Christian education is achieved by offering adults an extra exposure to God's Word during the weekend services. This will not necessarily be preaching, but systematic teaching for adults. Many churches call this adult Sunday school. This is the next step for all believers. It can be done either in the morning or in the evening. Another category of our life can be covered, giving three or four more principles for us to apply that week. This is good, but further steps are needed for us to learn together .

Then comes the mid-week discipleship training.

Here is where interested adults are given a choice of three or more levels of training classes - beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Christians are encouraged to attend training classes based on maturity level. A different instructor teaches each training class. The training is progressive. In other words, they should complete one phase before going to the next level. Each training series can last for up to twelve weeks. Weekly assignments are given for each participant to complete. Time is given in class to demonstrate, practice, and exchange ideas of implementation of what is being taught. Students are asked to practice the principles during class time. The next step completes the discipleship process.

The action happens in the small group.

The final arena for doing the Word is achieved in small gatherings of 15 or less people. The emphasis is prayer and doing the Word. Each has a mature leader, an assistant leader in training and a host or hostess. Each has specific duties and roles. To become a group leader it would be ideal to have progressed through the stages of participant, host-hostess, assistant, and finally group leader. This is where the action is. This is where we truly practice the Word with each other.

Small group ministry would include:

- Wholesome fellowship where the unsaved would feel welcome.
- Sharing of needs and concerns in honesty and transparency.
- Prayer for one another would be a high priority.
- Applying the principles they have learned in the weekend and mid-week services.
- Light refreshments served to facilitate fellowship.

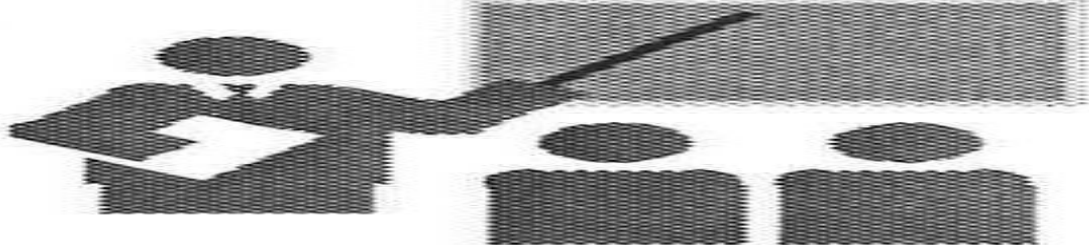
Learning is accelerated in the small group.

The value of the small group is obvious. The small group is where accelerated discipleship truly happens. Learning together in a small group atmosphere does the following:

- Provides personal accountability to see that we perform what we promised to do.
- Provides an honest evaluation of our discipleship progress by those who love us.
- Provides a means of developing leadership for church related programs.
- Provides a loving atmosphere where all can learn together.
- Allows our children and youth to be involved in the process of discipleship.

Isn't this over-kill?

Going to church meetings two or three times a week! Isn't this over-kill on discipleship?



A Balanced Life

Strike a balance.

Learning together is a privilege Christians enjoy in any nation. It provides the avenue for a balanced life. Learning the Bible way to pursue life brings freedom, whether our society is free or not. The Lord wants us to strike a balance . He desires us to serve Him as we serve one another. This means we gain strength and wisdom from Him so we can reach out and serve our fellow man. Our family, our neighbor, and our co-worker each deserve our attention. We need instruction on how to balance our service to others. Healthy discipleship should answer most of the questions.

God expects us to be productive.

Balancing our lives by pleasing God in our daily activities will lead to a fulfilled and abundant life. As we devote ourselves to practicing the good that we have learned we are on our way to true living. Serving others is our ultimate goal, but we also need to provide for those in our care. As we balance all these responsibilities by operating in love, we will live very productive lives. This is revealed in Titus 3: 14.

Titus 3:14 Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

Beware of conflicting values.

Secular training is needed to enhance our vocations . We need to make a living to provide for our families. Secular learning helps us to make a decent living so we are not a burden to the church. However, when we assimilate the customs and values of the secular culture, we are in conflict with the Lord. We need to be careful not to learn the accepted ways of our nation if they conflict with the Word of God. The world's ways are NOT our ways.

Jeremiah 10:2-3 This is what the LORD says: "Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them. For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel."

Give an example of how the Holy Spirit uses you to minister what you have learnt..



**Exam
ple:**

Going to Bible College or Seminary

Believers who are called by God to teach the Bible to adults should pursue a formal education beginning with a good full gospel Bible college. If a believer is also called to teach in a Bible school setting, he should pursue a degree from a seminary that advocates full gospel doctrines. These kinds of schools and universities are hard to find. It is recommended that the prospective student obtain a doctrinal statement of what the school believes before committing to attend.

Seek the practical, not the academics.

Jesus taught by example. Search for a learning atmosphere that emphasizes practical training that can be walked out in everyday life. An academic emphasis produces a wealth of Biblical information from learned scholars that may or may not be applicable to healing the hurts of our family and friends. However, scholarly learning will straighten out a person's theology and will keep them from teaching half-truths and heresy. MTC encourages those called by God to be teachers to pursue as much formal education as their time and budget will allow.

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Give a personal illustration of how James 3:1 has impacted your desire to teach from the Bible.



**Exam
ple:**

School of hard knocks.

Some of the best training for being a pastor is a diploma from the school of hard knocks. Serving as an assistant pastor under a seasoned senior pastor is where we should start. When we have struggled to comfort those who are experiencing tragedy, death, heartbreak, divorce, trauma, crime, physical abuse, molestation, betrayal, and misfortune, then we are being readied for pastoring. Bible school does not prepare us for these things. Life does.

**The MTC
Pattern**

At MTC we have developed a pattern for learning together that works. It is similar to how Jesus made disciples. The principles are simple, but they are proven effective.

Keep it simple.

The lesson plans are applicable to an international audience. This requires that we avoid long words and hard to understand principles. This is appealing to leaders in other nations.

Must have cross-cultural application.

What works for Kiwi believers must work overseas. If not, it fails to have cross-cultural

application. The principles in the Bible are for a worldwide audience. How they are taught in one country should apply to another country. The MTC training manual topics follow the same themes developed by seasoned cross-cultural specialists with many years of experience. ¹

Major on practical application.

In whatever country or culture, the words of the Bible must be relevant to those who hear. If they are not applicable to where we live, they are of little use. We must be able to do what we are learning. MTC has endeavoured to make all the lessons practical. We can apply them immediately to our situation. This has great appeal to those desiring to live an abundant life in Christ.

Use lots of scripture.

Jesus' words are spirit and are life. We need to pivot everything we teach around the written Word of God. It has high impact into the mind of a disciple. Biblical principles must reflect specific scripture. Our examples change constantly, but the Word of God never changes. It is the Word that sets people free. The Word will equip us for every good work. It's all inspired by God. That is why MTC uses an abundance of scripture. Our goal is to stay within what is written in the Bible. The Bible is our true training manual.

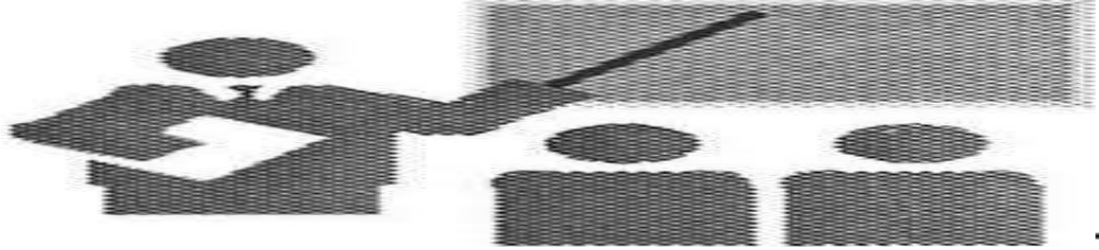
2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Corinthians 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

Keep it short.

It does not take four years to equip a believer for ministry. The MTC format prepares a marketplace believer (or an in-service leader) with a balanced foundation for effective ministry. It only takes about nine months for three years, coming once a week to a ministry training class. It can be done more quickly if a person wants to double-up on the classes. Each topic is contained in one training manual. One manual can be taught in a 10-day mission trip to overseas leaders. In six trips we have trained pastors and leaders for effective ministry. It works if we keep it condensed.

Give an example of how MTC works in your own setting



Learning to Win

As we pursue our training to become effective disciples, we do it to win the race that is set before us. There are no shortcuts to becoming a mature believer, but we can become effective ministers in a relatively short time. The basics of ministry are within the grasp of every believer. They just need to be shown how. Let us learn together how to compete for the crown that will last forever!

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

LESSON SEVEN

REACH OUT TOGETHER

To reach out means to touch others with a part of the Gospel. This requires the church to leave the meeting place and go where people are in need of the Gospel. We will discover in this lesson how to obey Jesus' command to GO! Whenever we go with the Gospel, it means we are involved in evangelism. We will discover the joy and excitement of becoming involved in biblical evangelism.

Go Into All the World

Jesus said to go.

We are commanded to go into our part of a hurting world and make a difference. Jesus said we are to love the Lord and then go love one another, even as He loves us. That means we should get out of the church building and demonstrate how much we love people. He says for us to preach the Gospel to everybody, baptize those who believe, drive out demons, speak with new tongues, and heal the sick. To an evangelist, that sounds like fun. To the rest of the Body of Christ, that is scary.

Mark 16:15-18 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well. "

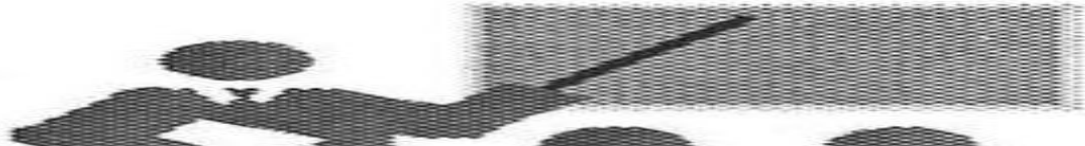
I don't want to.

The church of the West has become apathetic. We know we should reach out to the unsaved and help them find Christ, but since so few are doing it, we don't want to either. In fact, Western Christians have a similar attitude of Thomas, who did not want to face those who opposed Jesus and the Gospel. He felt he would die if he had to face the unconverted and the religious people.

John 11:14-16 So then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Not so in other countries.

When you visit Christians in developing nations around the globe, you find a different attitude. The healthy churches are obeying the commands of the Lord to reach out and make their faith in Jesus Christ known to their neighbours. They simply believe it is what you do. This is especially true in certain countries like the Philippines, South America, and Africa. Many of the healthy churches in these nations are now sending missionaries to America because they are concerned about our lack of reaching out together and evangelizing the unsaved.



What Does the Bible Say?

It's not an option.

The Bible has a lot to say about healthy churches doing their part in reaching out to a lost and dying world. It is not an option. It is a biblical mandate that we obey Jesus when He says go. Being human, we want to avoid the rejection and hostile reception we get when we mention the name of Jesus Christ. It helps to know that the rejection is coming from the anti-Christ spirit that is loose in the world. But, we still want to avoid the angry disputes from those that criticize our beliefs. We know Jesus wants us to go. We just don't know what to say.

He said go.

Matthew 28: 18-19 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ..."

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

He gave the power to go.

Many believers are not aware that the Holy Spirit was sent for the primary reason of empowering us to be a witness to reach out to others. It's obvious we need the full power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish anything for God. Let's take a closer look at the last command Jesus gave us about reaching out to the world.

Acts 1:4-8 . . . He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. and to the ends of the earth. "



Example:

I don't know what to say.

After the Holy Spirit has come upon us, the Bible says we are fully empowered to venture out into the hostile world where the Devil seems to rule. Scripture promises that the Holy Spirit will give us what to say when it is needed. The early disciples were promised this when they faced their accusers when brought to trial. We can surely trust the Holy Spirit to

give us the right words to say. We don't have to preach. We just say what the Holy Spirit prompts us to say. He is the one who gives us a passion and the words for reaching out effectively.

Mark 13:11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

Luke 12:11-12 When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

Give an illustration when the Holy Spirit told you what to say during a witnessing



Our primary mission.

Jesus was very clear regarding our primary mission as we go into all the world reaching out to people. We are to act on His behalf as ambassadors, carrying the message of reconciliation. The primary mission of a healthy church is to get people to the place where they can hear the Gospel and respond to God's offer of salvation through the finished work of Jesus Christ. This is the mission of Christ's Ambassadors International, the parent ministry of the Ministry Training Centers.

2 Corinthians 5:19-20 God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

How can they hear?

The most difficult part of our mission is to get the unsaved into a position or situation where they can hear the Gospel and respond. We know that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But we need a plan. This is where we need the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit. We must listen for His plan for each group of people He desires to be converted. This takes patience and sensitivity. The apostle Paul had some wisdom regarding this.

Romans 10:13-17 Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Meet them where they are.

There have been hundreds of thousands of plans created by the Body of Christ over the

centuries to reach out to the multitudes of the unsaved millions. Many have been very successful. Others were not. God expects Christians worldwide to continue reaching out to those who are facing eternal separation from God. But, we need wisdom in how to do this. This is when we rely on the Holy Spirit to inspire us as to how to meet them where they are.



Give a personal illustration of the Lord giving you a plan to witness to an unsaved person.

Example:

Soften the Gospel with love.

The secret to successful evangelistic outreaches is finding ways to "soften" the Gospel by demonstrating the love of God before we preach. Before a hungry man can hear your request, you must feed him. Before a deaf person can hear the Gospel, his ears must be open. A person in pain is more likely to accept the message of Christ after He has just healed them. A single mom with hungry kids is more likely to come to our church after we have delivered a box of food. A prisoner needs us to listen to their story of misfortune. They are more likely to hear our story after we've heard theirs. People want to know we are real. They want to see love in action before they are ready to hear us preach. Jesus gave us His plan.

Matthew 25:42-46 "For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me." They also will answer, "**Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?**" He will reply, "**I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.**" Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Find a reason to be with them.

People in the world will have a serious need sometime in their life. Trauma, pain, disappointment, lack, hunger, depression, loneliness, and desperation can happen suddenly. Jesus Christ came to meet every human need. When we are sensitive to act on what the Holy

Spirit is calling us to do, He will always lead us to those in need. Then we can go in the love and power of God and meet their need.

Give a personal illustration of how the Holy Spirit led you to someone in need and what happened.



Be ready when they ask why.

Human kindness and mercy are hard to find in a world full of hurt, anger, and frustration. When someone does show up and offer to heal the wounds, soothe the rage, and suggest a solution to the dilemmas, people are amazed that someone really cares. They want to know why. They may say, "Why are you willing to help me?" That's when we can say *why* we are there. To bring help and mercy in a time of need in the name of Jesus Christ! That's the way Jesus would do it. Reconciliation needs a platform of love wherein to operate. Otherwise, we may have forced an unwanted entrance into the lives of people.

Let's Reach Out

There is a gift for every need.

The Holy Spirit has a gift to meet every human need. As we learned in the "Foundations for Discovery" series, the Holy Spirit desires to activate His gifts for the purpose of attracting people to Jesus Christ. He will use any willing believer to meet the needs of both the saved and unsaved. We have a mission to the unsaved. His gifts through us are to be made available to all in need.

Reach out in the area of our passion.

Once we have discovered our assortment of gifts and talents, we should concentrate them in the area of our passion. Whether our passion includes the young or the old, the helpless or the strong, or the down-and-outers or the up-and-outers, we need to apply ourselves by reaching out to those we can best help. We should choose the area of our expertise and go do it!

Give an example of when you reached out to someone in the area of your passion.



Examp
le:

**Evangelism
Strategies**

Every healthy church should have its own strategy for reaching out to the lost. It will be reflected in the mission statement of the church. The solutions and ideas for reaching out today are as numerous as the number of churches in the world. Each is attempting to follow what the Holy Spirit is prompting them to do in their area of the world. Let's explore some of the more effective ways that healthy churches may reach out.

Reaching out to the needy.

Jesus always referred to the needy as a primary target for reaching out. He said it this way:

Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Mark 14:7 "The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want."

Luke 14:13-14 "But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. "

Reaching out to our community.

These ideas are not new. In the West, churches have not directed enough resources to helping the poor. So, by default, the government has had to tax everyone to pay for meeting the needs of the poor in our country. It may be time for healthy churches to rise up and begin to meet the needs of the poor, starting with those sitting in their pews. How do we do this?

- Start a shelter for the area homeless.
- Start a food bank for the hungry in the community.
- Start a clothing bank for needy children and adults.
- Start a free meal deal for the unemployed in the church or community.
- Start a job finding service for those in the church or community looking for work.
- Start a used furniture clearinghouse for the needy to come get what they need.
- Start a free "walk the second mile" used shoe service for the poor.

Reaching out to the unchurched.

There are thousands of lonely families looking for a place where they can meet some genuine friends and obtain some decent values training for their children. This is especially true in the fast paced life of Americans. Many families have been displaced because of job changes or other reasons requiring a move. They would come to a healthy church if they knew one existed and if they were given an invitation. There are a lot of people looking for a church home. We call these "unchurched." Here are some strategies to reach these families.

- Organize a seasonal hand-bill ministry describing church activities and make a distribution of them to all the homes within a few miles of the church.

- Organize a grocery store display board for "Community Care" and display a nice brochure using creative graphics depicting the many caring benefits of attending your church.
- Conduct a door to door survey on the most needed changes to make your community the safest and most desirable in the city. Then go back and show them that the healthiest church in the area will spearhead the needed changes.
- Conduct a community-wide, public open-air concert for the benefit of the handicapped or disadvantaged children of the area.
- Organize or participate in a March for Jesus in your community.

Give an illustration of when you participated in reaching out to the unchurched.



**Exam
ple:**

Reaching out to the unsaved.

Every healthy church should have a strategy for reaching the lost. It will depend on the calling and creativity of the pastor, but there must be strategy nevertheless. Here are some ideas.

- Sponsor a summer tent evangelism outreach on a vacant lot in the middle of your community.
- Begin "seeker sensitive" events where members will feel safe to bring and include their unsaved friends and relatives. These must be done very creatively and with no surprises. If done correctly, the unsaved will feel they can return without being "pounced" on by the evangelism team.
- Conduct a well-publicized celebrity music concert, inviting the general public at discount prices.
- Conduct seasonal holiday dramas and/or musicals that appeal to the unsaved. Advertise the event in the secular media.
- Conduct an "All Party" political forum at your church prior to a major election without taking sides on hot issues. Just holding it in a church will say we are concerned and informed.
- Begin youth outreaches that focus on the hard to reach of the community.
- Start outdoor recreation youth events that give opportunity for church youth to

bring their unchurched friends.

- Conduct all-community children's holiday carnivals for: Halloween, spring (Easter), summer, and winter (Christmas) festivals.
- Conduct creative vacation Bible schools that focus on the unsaved kids of the community.

Give an example of how you or your church reaches out to the unsaved.



**Exam
ple:**

Reaching out to the neighbourhood.

Healthy churches will encourage their members to conduct on-going neighbourhood evangelism strategies focusing on their immediate neighbours. Many of these strategies will be tailor-made depending on what the Holy Spirit has inspired each family to do. Here are some ideas that have worked in the past years.

- Neighbourhood get-acquainted parties.
- Joint garage sales with the unsaved.
- Neighbourhood house sitting cooperatives.
- Neighbourhood "drop-in" coffees that meet at regular times of the month.
- Neighbourhood disaster preparedness committees.
- Block home security watch committees.
- Reciprocal lawn mowing cooperatives.
- Neighbourhood get-out-and-vote campaigns.
- Neighbourhood adopt-a-block ministry.
- Dream Center for rehabilitation, job training, and job finding services.

Give an example of how you or your church reaches out to the neighborhoods of your community.



**Exam
ple:**

Reaching out to the world.

Healthy churches will most always have a strategy for conducting cross-cultural missions programs. The larger the church, the more resources are available for conducting a vital missions outreach. If the pastor or another person in leadership has taken a mission trip, they will most always come back with a firm vision for reaching out to the world. This is why MTC encourages its student ministers to save up for at least one mission trip in their

lifetime. These trips are truly life changing if they are conducted correctly. The trips emphasizing evangelism can be very powerful. Whenever we reach out to the unsaved, there will be signs, wonders, and miracles that accompany the preached Word. Here are some ways a healthy church can reach the world.

- Begin building a relationship with a "sister church" in a foreign country. Take repeated trips there until you have built a trust with the leadership. Offer super-saver trips so church members can take part in the relationship over the years.
- Select a recommended project from your trusted missions organization and commit to complete your financial commitment within a given period. Plan an organized visit to the project site upon completion of the commitment.
- Organize a summer youth outreach trip to a cross-cultural church situation. This can be a Pacific Island, African, Native American, European, Asian, African, Central or South American location. The youth should have predetermined assignments so everyone has something to accomplish. Have a way for the youth to raise part or all of their travel money. There should be plenty of adults that go along for proper supervision.
- Send a medical or dental missions team to a foreign land for relief purposes.
- Send a construction team to a foreign land to build or repair churches and homes.
- Send a leadership teaching team to a group of foreign churches that have no access to Bible training.
- Send a music/evangelism team to a foreign country to help a sister church evangelize their community or village.
- Send a mercy team to a foreign country that has experienced war, riots, earthquakes, or other disasters.



**Exam
ple:**

Reach Out to Our Part of the World

Wherever we are there are opportunities to reach out and touch our part of the world. All that is needed is a willing heart and obedience to what the Holy Spirit has instructed each of us to do. Then we need to sit down and discuss how we can do it together. As a collective body of believers, we are much more apt to do a better job. When everyone has the opportunity to participate in a well thought out strategy birthed by the Holy Spirit, there will be success. A

healthy church is one that reaches out together. Become a part of the process.



Reach Out

1. How do you intend to reach out to the unsaved?

James 1:22 2. Does your church have opportunities to reach out to the needy?

- What can you do to facilitate an evangelism strategy in your church?
- Do you now feel confident to personally lead someone to Jesus Christ?