

RELIGIOUS STUDY CENTER

Lessons for Spiritual Development

Growing In the Spirit

LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Growing in the Spirit

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The Holy Sprit is Jesus' Gift to Help Every Problem in the World


Receive a greater measure of the Holy Spirit by understanding what He does when He comes.

A generator is machine that is full of power. The electricity can do many things for a village. It can give power to turn on lights, make fans go around and stereos play music. However this will only happen if there are wires connecting the generator to the houses and to the machines.

There is something we need that is more powerful than a generator. The Bible says that Jesus has given great power to God's church through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is able to help us in many ways, bringing love, joy, healing, wisdom and conversion. This will only happen if we connect ourselves to this wonderful power. In this lesson we will learn more about what the Holy Spirit does when He comes and fill us and how to pray so that we can receive all the benefits of the Holy Spirit's presence.

ICON KEY

 Apply This to Your Life

 Plant another Seed

Read John 14:16-18. How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is not a power like electricity. The Holy Spirit is God who comes close to us with help for every problem we face.

The Holy Spirit Gives Power to Witness

Every Christian wants Jesus to come back. Jesus said He would come only after the whole world had heard the good news of His salvation. We want to help share the good news with the whole world. Sometimes it seems very hard.

Read Acts 1:8. What did He say was the answer for finishing the work of witnessing to the entire world?

What Happens when the Holy Spirit Comes?

The Holy Spirit has great power. If we only know a little about the Holy Spirit we will not take much time or interest to ask for Him to help us. The more we know about the Holy Spirit, the more eagerly we will ask for more of the Holy Spirit to fill us.

Read your Bible carefully to find verses about the Holy Spirit. To start with, let's look at what happened when the disciples prayed for the Holy Spirit. They humbled their hearts, confessed their sins to God and made things right with each other. Ten days later the room was shaken by wind and fire—symbols of the Holy Spirit.

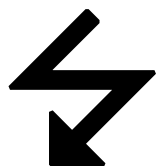
Acts 2:36-47 shows many wonderful things that happened that day. Read the passage and write down as many things as you can find.

There were miracles such as sick people being healed. People hardened in their sins were deeply convicted that they had killed Jesus and cried out for salvation. Many were baptized. The people truly loved one another and gave generously to help each other. Earnest prayers and joyful worship happened all the time. The people could see Jesus in their lives.

He Will Do it Again

Isn't that what we want? Don't we need those things in our churches and in our personal lives? Imagine what would happen in our communities if they saw the same thing happen among us. God promises to finish His work. There will be a final outpouring of the Holy Spirit and all nations will hear. As the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and our churches we will find the same things happening. It must start with us.

Read Luke 11:13. Write this powerful promise here. Memorize it and use it in your prayers, claiming God's promise.



Apply this to Your Life

To help you receive a greater measure of the Holy Spirit, prayerfully read through the following questions for the ten areas the Holy Spirit uses to finish His work in the world. Pray the words of Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

1. Conviction. "Presence of the Spirit"

The Holy Spirit is everywhere and working in everyone's heart. His compassion and desire for His children is greater than anything we can ever imagine. We can be confident He is working with us and with everyone around us to convict them of their need for God.

- A) What does God want to change in me today?
- B) Am I partnering with the Holy Spirit, daily asking Him to show me what to do and say to reach those who are lost?

2. Conversion. "Born of the Spirit"

We cannot share what we do not have. We must experience the power of the cross, knowing God's great love for us and receiving His salvation. We have great joy because we are forgiven and have eternal life. We become a new person, reborn by the Holy Spirit. This is the basis of our witness.

- A) Am I confident that God loves me?
- B) Have I received forgiveness and become a new person in Christ?

3. Bible Study. "Sword of the Spirit"

A baby must grow or it will die. A branch must stay connected to the vine or it will wither. We must continue to grow and be connected to God through prayer, Bible study and meditation. This is how the breath of the Spirit will come through us and make our witness alive and powerful. This is how we bring God's presence into our work.

- A) Am I spending meaningful time with God every day in Bible study?

4. Christian Character. "Fruit of the Spirit"

The natural result of connection with Jesus is to have the fruits love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These will win the hearts of people and draw them towards God. Satan and his evil angels war against us. We must watch and pray continually and make sure there are no weak spots in our armor.

- A) In what ways do I need to become more like Jesus in character?
- B) What sins and temptations do I want to overcome through Christ?

5. Prayer. "Breath of the Spirit"

We need God like we need air. We receive His life-giving power through prayer. We need to talk to God all the time about everything. We also need to pray for others. We cannot change anyone. Only the Holy Spirit can convict and transform hearts. As we pray, we humble our hearts, recognize our weakness and rejoice in God's strength. Satan seeks to block the way to people's hearts and God invites us to intercede to join Him in His victory. The Holy Spirit will make our prayers powerfully effective, like fire lighting incense.

- A) Am I taking my problems to God in prayer and surrendering my life to Him each day?
- B) Am I spending significant time praying for the lost?

6. Good Works. "Gifts of the Spirit"

The Holy Spirit fills us with His oil and makes us a shining lamp of good works to reach people. He will give us many gifts to empower us to do work as Jesus did.

- A) Am I helping people with their problems as Jesus did?
- B) What areas can I learn more about so I can help more effectively?
(Such as finances, health, literacy, youth ministry, evil spirit problems, etc)

7. Spoken Witness. "Tongues of the Spirit"

When the disciples prayed, the Holy Spirit filled them with boldness and they spoke everywhere for God with power and deep love. We will too.

- A) Am I praying for the Spirit's power and His wisdom for what to say?
- B) Am I telling people what God has done for me?

8. Community of Believers. "Body of the Spirit"

We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body and each of us affects the other. We are to show the world that we are Jesus' disciples by how we love one another. The world will be drawn to God as they see Him in our community.

- A) Am I loving other Christians as Christ love Me, helping them and forgiving them?
- B) Do I meet regularly with other Christians for prayer, Bible study and mutual encouragement?

9. Worship. "Temple of the Spirit"

God created us to enjoy Him and worship Him. We are invited to meet and worship God together every Sabbath and other times too. When two or more are gathered, God comes in a special way. We become a temple for His dwelling. Each country and ethnic group reflects a piece of God's character.

- A) Do we truly sense God's presence when we come together for worship?
- B) Am I keeping the Sabbath by spending the day in God's presence?

10. Multiplication. "Rain of the Spirit"

God wants to reach the entire world. He is preparing us daily, growing us to be mature enough to receive the full measure of the Holy Spirit. He wants us to prepare ourselves and others by seeking to train each member to be a worker for God and how in turn to train up others. Each church is also to start daughter churches and to teach them to start other new churches. He will finish the work through His church and then come again!

- A) Am I daily praying for the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
- B) Am I nurturing and training my fellow church members to be strong in God and be effective in ministry?
- C) Are we preparing to start another church?



Plant Another Seed

As God fills you more and more with His Holy Spirit, begin sharing with other Christians what you have experienced. Encourage them to examine the Bible texts about the Holy Spirit and to ask themselves the same questions. Help them to grow in each area.

That is what these training materials are for. We will learn lessons that will help in each of the above ten areas and you will experience more of God's love and power in your life. This will strengthen you to help others have the same

Three Steps to Partnering with the Holy Spirit

Partner with the Holy Spirit to reach those who do not know God.

All around the world there are more than six billion people. Many of them live lonely, difficult and sad lives. They desperately need the joy and hope of the gospel. The task of reaching them seems almost impossible. In this lesson we will discover God's plan for reaching the world and how we can partner with Him.

Read Psalm 139:7-10. Have you ever felt lonely, afraid or without hope? What is the good news about the Holy Spirit?

Read Psalm 139:16-18. How much does the Holy Spirit know about you?

Isn't it amazing how much God knows about us and yet He is full of good and loving thoughts towards us. When we experience this we want to give our lives completely to Him. Read Psalm 139:23-24. Write below the words God wants us to say to the Holy Spirit.

This Psalm declares clearly that God is everywhere, knows every single person and wants to bless them, transform them and lead them. The Holy Spirit is the answer to every problem we face. He is also the answer for every family member and neighbor we are trying to help. Let us discover how to partner with the Holy Spirit in three simple steps. These are summarized by three questions we should ask God every day.

1. What do You want to change in me?
2. What do You want me to do?
3. What do You want me to say?

1. What Do You Want to Change in Me?

Read John 16:7-8. What does the Holy Spirit convict us of?

The Holy Spirit is like a good doctor.

The Doctor Tells Us

about our sickness

about the cure

about what will happen if we don't accept the cure.

The Holy Spirit Tells Us

about our sin,

about righteousness

about the judgment

The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts about the sins we have so that we will know what is ruining our lives and leading to death. He then tells us about righteousness which is God's gift of forgiveness and a new life. He also warns us that if we reject God's gift of salvation we will be judged and die in our sins.

How do we hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us?

- A. The Holy Spirit speaks very clearly through God's word. We should read God's word every day and ask the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment. Then we should follow what we read and hear.
- B. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in a quiet small voice. You have surely heard Him telling you not to do something wrong. Sometimes you have heard Him urging you to do something to help others.
- C. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through other Christians who give us counsel. We should humbly listen to them and take their advice if it is consistent with the Bible.

Each day ask the question: "What do You want to change in me?" Then take time to listen. The Holy Spirit wants to make your life truly happy and blessed. The more He shows you the way of righteousness and the more you follow, the greater will be His blessing for you. As your life is transformed, many others around you will see and be drawn to know God as well.

It may seem impossible to follow what God is asking. Claim His promise in Hebrews 10:16-17, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them" and "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." The Holy Spirit will surely help you.

2. What do You Want Me to Do?

There is so much the Holy Spirit wants to do in the world. He really wants to use you to reach out and touch them. Read Acts 8:26-40. How did this important Ethiopian become a Christian?

The Holy Spirit was working in the Ethiopian's heart ever since He was a baby. Because the Holy Spirit loves all people and is everywhere, He is working with everyone. Later the Holy Spirit used the scriptures to convict the Ethiopian of His need for God. Finally the Holy Spirit sent Philip across his path and used him to explain salvation to him.

The Holy Spirit is working to reach everyone that you know or pass today. He wants to use you to help them and He can impress you what to do. Each morning, as you think about your day, pray about what you will do and the people you will meet. Ask the question, "What do You want me to do?" Then be quiet and write down the thoughts that come.

Here are some examples of what might happen:

- When you pray about your neighbors, the thought may come, "Take some fruit to _____ (name of a neighbor) and find out how he's doing." It may be that God knows this person is very lonely today.
- When you are thinking about your work for the day, the thought may come, "First do this _____ (a certain job)." It may be that God's wisdom will bring you better success or it may be that He wants you to meet someone who needs His love.
- When you pray for your family, the thought may come, "Spend some time with your son tonight." It could be that he has something important to discuss with you, but he will not talk until he sees that you care enough to spend time with him.

3. What Do You Want Me to Say?

There is so much the Holy Spirit also wants to say to the world. You are His mouth! Read John 4:3-19 and 39-42. What helped this woman to become a believer in Jesus as her Savior?

The Holy Spirit worked through Jesus to draw the lady into salvation. He led Jesus to the well at the right moment. The Holy Spirit touched her with Jesus' love since most Israelites hated Samaritans. The Holy Spirit revealed to Jesus

truths that she needed to hear. Isaiah 50:4 says about Jesus, “The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning. He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.”

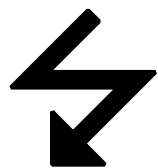
Read Matthew 10:18-20. Will God impress you with the words that you should speak to be a witness for Him?

Here are some examples of how God may impress you what to speak.

- Before you go to visit someone, stop and pray for them. Ask God to impress you with what to say and when to say it. The thought may come, “Tell him how God’s promises have helped you stop worrying about your finances.” Follow the thoughts that come and see how God works.
- When you are in the middle of a conversation, you can pray in your heart, “Lord what do you want me to say? Show me how to talk about You to this person.” God can then show you the person’s needs and interests and impress you with the right story or thoughts to share.
- When you are preparing a Bible study or talk, you can ask God to impress you what to speak about. He knows the needs of the people better than you and can give the thoughts that they need.

Isn’t it beautiful how much God loves each sinner and how eager He is to give the words to reach them? These three simple questions will help you partner with Him.

Read Colossians 1:9-12. Pray this prayer and believe that God will make you truly fruitful for His glory.



Apply this to Your Life

Right now decide that you will take time to ask these three questions daily. Write them on a piece of paper and place them where you will see them every day. Ask them in the morning during your prayers. Ask them every time you come to a problem in which you are not sure what to do. In this way you will truly be a partner with the Holy Spirit



Plant Another Seed

Meet together with other Christians so that you can pray for God to use you to share His love with others. Study the Ten Commandments and the life of Jesus to see how God wants you to live. Together ask the Lord these three questions and pray for each other to follow God's leading. He will use all of you to share His love with many.

Gods Amazing Love for Us

Clearly know God's love for us and more fully experience it.

Where Can We Find True Love? The radio is full of songs about love. Many movies are love stories. In the real world it is very hard to find true love. Best friends form a business together, but later they split up because of greed. A husband leaves his wife when he finds someone prettier. A man makes a mistake and his neighbor of many years gets angry and won't forgive him. It seems that love in this world is as strong as sifting sand. Where can we find true love that doesn't change?

Read Lamentations 3:22-23. What does this text say about God's love?

The Bible says that God's love does not change. He is truly faithful and will never stop loving us no matter what. This is an amazing thought. Many times, Christians forget how much God loves them. They fail at some task or fall in to sin. Then they get discouraged. They wonder if God still loves them. The Bible promises in Romans 5:5, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." The Holy Spirit has been given to us to draw us back into the knowledge of God's unending love for us. In this lesson we will look at three things that the Holy Spirit uses to daily remind us of God's faithfulness and willingness to sacrifice Himself for us.

1. God's Love Can be Seen in Nature

Look around you. Can you see a sugar palm tree? What can you make from the sugar palm? From its leaves, its fruit, its trunk?

This is one example of something God created that has many uses to bless us. What other things are there in nature that God has given you to bless you?

Whenever you breathe, or eat or go anywhere, think about what God has created for you. He did this because He loves you. Thank Him for His wonderful love.

2. God's Love Can be Seen in a Mother

A mother is pregnant for nine long months. She goes through a painful delivery then nurses and cares for her child with tender love and patience. It doesn't matter if her child is not as beautiful as the neighbors. The child belongs to her and she loves him. Often her children are sick and she lovingly bathes their head and tries her best to make them well. Even if her child is mentally handicapped she is still devoted.

God has told that He loves us like a parent. He is called the heavenly Father because He has the same devotion to us as the best parent on earth.

Read Isaiah 49:15. What does God promise to you even if your parents stop loving you?

Our parents do not love us perfectly. Sometimes they have favorites, preferring the children who are smarter or more talented. We can feel very sad when we are not loved equally. Other people also compare and tend to love those who are more beautiful or wealthy. Because of this, we sometimes find it difficult to believe that God really loves us.

Read Acts 10:34-35. What does this say about God's love?

If your parents have been faithful and self-sacrificing towards you, then let their love remind you of how much God loves you. If they have been unkind and imperfect in their love, go to the Bible and read about the true Father of love and find refuge in His unending compassion for you.

3. God's Love Can be Seen in Jesus' Death on the Cross

Read 1 John 4:8-10. What does this tell you about God's love for you?

Did God have to send His Son to die for us? No, we deserved to die because of our sins. God could have let everyone die. Because He truly loved us and wanted

to save us so we could live with Him forever, He sent His loved Son to die in our place.

Read Romans 5:8. Write the text here and place your name where it says “we.”

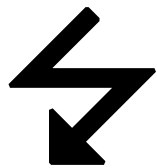
When you feel unloved by others, repeat these words out loud with your name in the text. When you have troubles and you feel God is far away, repeat these words out loud again with your name in the text. Remember that God has said, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you” Isaiah 43:1-2.

When Jesus was still in heaven He knew that if He became a human He would have to suffer many terrible things and finally die on the cross with our weight of shame and sin. Still Jesus chose to come. Why did He do that? Surely it was because He loved us.

The Bible says that God knows all things, so even before you were born, God thought about you. He even saw you and every sin you would commit, but still He loved you, even more than the best parent who patiently loves a disobedient child. Jesus looked down from heaven and wanted you to be with Him for eternity. That is why He chose to come to this earth.

Read. Matthew 20:17-19. What did Jesus know would happen if He kept walking to Jerusalem?

Can you see clearly how much God loves you? He determinedly walked into terrible pain and death for you. May you thank Him for this every day of your life and never make Him sad by saying, “I don’t think He loves me.”



Apply it to Your Life

We need to take time every day to remind ourselves of God’s love. Other people can be so unkind. We often feel unloved. This makes us discouraged and unable to love and help others unless we take time to fill our minds and hearts with God’s love.

Every day take time to:

1. Thank God for all the blessings you have in nature such as air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat, sunshine for the crops and birds that sing.
 2. Read God’s promises in the Bible that tell you His love for you is greater than any person’s love in the world.
 3. Praise God for Jesus’ death on the cross and remind yourself that He died specifically because He wanted you in heaven.
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Plant Another Seed

Read Luke 6:35-36. Because God's love has filled your heart, share this wonderful story with everyone you meet. Live this love, caring for people no matter how rich or poor, how beautiful or ugly. Love every nationality and even your enemies. Let them know God's love through you.

The Well and the Great Truths of Salvation

Know clearly the steps of salvation and to more fully experience them.

In this lesson we will look at a story that is a parable of salvation. Then we will explore the meaning of the parable by looking at the steps for salvation through various Bible texts. Read the story and think about its meaning.

One day a boy fell into a well. He was a good swimmer but of course he was immediately very frightened and tried to climb out. Each time he slipped back down the walls. His hands and his clothes were badly ripped. The top of the well seemed so far away. He knew he would drown unless someone came to help him.

“Help!” he screamed. “Somebody help me!”

Immediately a kind face peered over the edge of the well. “I saw you fall,” said the man. “I’m here to help you.” The boy was very surprised that someone had answered so quickly.

“Here is a rope,” said the man as he tossed it down into the well.

“Is it strong enough?” asked the boy.

“It is very strong,” assured the man.

“But will you hold it tight?” The boy was feeling a bit afraid to trust this man he hardly knew.

“I will hold it tight,” he promised gently. “Hurry now, you are getting more and more tired. Let go of the side. Stop swimming and grab the rope.”

Wearily, the boy grabbed on and the man pulled him quickly out of the well. The boy fell exhausted to the ground. Then the man bandaged the boy's scrapes. He even gave him his shirt to replace the torn one.

"Please be careful not to fall in again!" counseled the kind man.

"Thank you for saving me!" cried the boy. "I will never forget what you have done."

The Meaning of the Parable

Do you ever feel like that boy in the well? Do you feel discouraged by your sins and wonder if you are really a Christian? Do you feel confident that God has saved you from your sins and will save you from this world when Jesus comes again? Take courage today! God has sent the Holy Spirit to bring Jesus' gift of salvation more deeply into our lives. We can today more fully experience the promise in Titus 3:4-5, "When the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Read each of the following verses and think about how salvation compares to the story above and to your own life.

1. Read Romans 3:20,23. All humans are like the boy who fell into the well. The water is our sin. We try to climb out by our good works and merit-making celebrations. The well is too high. We cannot save ourselves. Do not be afraid because of your failures. Everybody has sinned and that is why we all need God's mercy!
 2. Read Romans 5:6-8. The God of Life hears us when we cry for help and He comes to rescue us. He knows about our sin, He hates the sin, but He always has compassion for the sinner. Do you feel confident about God's love? If not, review the previous lesson again.
 3. Read 1 Peter 3:18. Jesus is the rope that the God of Life lets down to save us. Jesus died carrying our sins so that we could have eternal life. His death for us is the only way out of the well. Try reading the story of Jesus' death again and thank God for each part that shows His forgiveness and love for you.
 4. Read Romans 6:23. He pulls us out of the well by His strength. He does this as a free gift because He is compassionate. Salvation comes entirely from His gracious kindness and His work. Have you come to fully realize that nothing you have done was enough to save you from sin and take you to heaven? You can confidently rejoice that God has given you salvation as a free gift!
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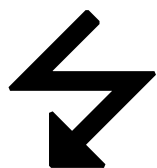
5. Read Romans 1:16. We receive God's power when we grab on to His help by faith. This is like being rescued as we grab onto the rope. We grab on to God's salvation when we believe and trust in all that Jesus did at the cross. Faith is a big and wonderful thing. Are you experiencing it? Look at the specific things that we do by faith:

- A. We stop trying to save ourselves through our own efforts and good works. Ephesians 2:8-9
- B. We confess our need and our sins and cry out for help. 1 John 1:9
- C. We believe in God's kindness and in Jesus' death for us. Romans 10:9-10
- D. We turn from swimming in our sin. We repent. Acts 5:31
- E. We receive forgiveness and a new heart. This is the robe of Christ's righteousness which covers our sins and gives us power to do good works. We are baptized. 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Acts 2:38

6. Read 2 Peter 2:18-22. We can jump back into the well and refuse the rope and drown.

It is possible to lose salvation through persistent sinning. According to Matthew 6:14-15, the sin that especially stops God's forgiveness is our refusal to forgive others.

7. Read Matthew 18:21-22. God will gladly offer the rope to us again. He is a very generous forgiver. Encourage your heart with this beautiful truth.



Apply it to Your Life

Search your heart and ask:

1. Do I know clearly it is impossible to save myself or make God love me by good works?
2. Have I turned from my sins and confessed to God that I need Him to save me?
3. Am I confident that God's heart is full of mercy for me and that He has given a perfect salvation through Jesus?
4. Have I received forgiveness and a new heart as a free gift from God?
5. Have I been baptized to show that God has washed my sins away?

Go through the prayer below quietly by yourself or with a trusted Christian friend or leader.

A Prayer for Receiving God's Salvation

Here is a prayer that can help you more fully experience God's salvation. This you can do each time you sin. You can also use it to help others receive God's salvation for the first time.

- Dear gracious heavenly Father. Thank you for Your mercy in sending Jesus to receive my sins on the cross.
- I confess my sins and ask You to forgive me. In specific I confess the sin of _____
- I thank You for forgiving me and I receive Your forgiveness!
- Because You have graciously forgiven me, I choose to forgive those who have hurt me or have helped lead me into this sin. In specific I forgive _____
- I reject this sin and its results. I receive God's freedom and I break its power on my life and those I've influenced, through Jesus' redemption on the cross.
- In place of my sins, I ask You to give me a new heart and come into my heart, bringing Your good qualities.
- I ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen

(For Excellent Prayers and Promises Read also Psalm 32, 51 and Isaiah 61)



Plant Another Seed

Now think about the people you know. With whom can you share this story of salvation this week? It may be your neighbor. It may be someone in the church who has never really experienced the joy of salvation. Tell them the story of the well and show them the Bible verses. Ask them if they know someone who needs to hear this and go with them to help them share.

Reading the Bible Brings Great Benefits

Grow closer to God and gain more of His wisdom and power through daily spending time in God's word.

God is like a parent who wants to help His children with all their needs. He thinks about our future and wants to give us wisdom to help us succeed. He sees danger and wants to protect us from evil. His heart is drawn close to us when we are discouraged and He wants to give us courage and hope.

Isn't it good to know we have a Father like that? But sometimes we don't feel that love and care. How does He give it to us? God chooses to help us in all these areas through His powerful Word, the Bible. This is why we should read God's Word.

Study the following texts to see how the Bible can help you.

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17. How many areas of your life can be helped by reading the Bible?

Many Christians have found a lot of wisdom in the book of Proverbs. You may want to read through this book and write down God's wisdom in the areas of your needs such as finances, relationships, temptations, health, etc. You can do this with any part of the Bible.

2. Read 2 Peter 1:2-4. What will God's promises do for you?

God's word is full of promises. Each one is for you. You may want to use a pen to highlight the verses in your Bible that give you encouragement and hope. You

can also write your name into any promise, such as verse four above: “By which have been give to _____ (your name) exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these _____ (your name) may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

3. Read Hebrews 4:12-13. The Holy Spirit uses the Bible like a sword. Why do we need a sword in our hearts?

God’s word is like a surgeon’s knife that cuts away a cancerous tumor from our body to save our lives. Whenever you read a text in the Bible that convicts you of sin, stop and confess your sin to God and ask Him to give you a clean heart.

4. As our Father, God wants us to know Him more and more. He wants us to enjoy Him and worship Him. The Bible is like a letter directly from God to you to help you know Him. As you read, let God’s word draw your heart closer to Him and help you love Him more.

Summary of the Benefits of Reading God’s Word

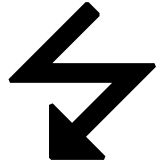
1. God’s word gives us wisdom.
2. God’s word gives us promises to encourage us and change us.
3. God’s word shows us the danger of our sin.
4. God’s word helps us know and love God.

How to Read God’s Word to Gain Benefit

Some people read the Bible and do not gain anything from it. They do not put its words in their hearts. They are like people who taste food but do not chew it and swallow it. If we want strength from God’s word, we must think about it carefully and put it into our hearts and lives.

Here is a simple way to read God’s word and gain much strength from it. These questions can be applied to any passage in the Bible. You can copy these questions into a notebook so that you can use them every day on a different passage. Some of the best books of the Bible to start with are Mark, John, Psalms, Proverbs, Genesis, James and 1 John. You can also keep the notebook with you throughout the day to remind you what God taught you. God’s word will make you strong in every way.

Try this now with the passage James 4:1-20 and follow the steps below.



Steps for Applying the Bible to Your Life

1. Prayer: Ask God to send the Holy Spirit to teach you through His word so that your heart's needs are fulfilled and you are prepared to serve Him.

 2. Choose a section of scripture for today's study and write it here _____

 3. Read the passage several times.

 4. Answer these questions:
 - Write what the text is saying about God's characteristics. Think about His power, His love and other qualities.

 - Write down any counsel, commandments or godly examples that the Lord wants you to practice in your life, whether in your family, work or neighborhood.

 - Write down any of God's promises from the scripture you have read. Claim these as your own. You can put your name right into the promise.

 - What do you think is God's special word that He is speaking to you today?

 - What text from the passage would you like to memorize?

-

5. Close with prayer, asking God to give you power to obey His commands and follow His will. Claim His promises to help. Carry this paper with you throughout the day to remind yourself what God has taught you.



Plant Another Seed

Isn't it a great blessing to experience the power of God's word? Don't you want to share this with others? Use these questions to go through a Bible passage with a church member or a new interest. Do this with them several times until they can easily do it by themselves and find great personal benefit from the Bible.

You can help those who cannot read or write by reading the Bible to them and asking them the same questions.

How to Lead Your Family in Worship

Lead your family in worshipping God together in order to honor Him and receive His strength, wisdom and forgiveness for your family.

When Jesus returns in the clouds, surely He will ask, “Fathers and mothers, where are your children?” We do not want to go to heaven without our sons and daughters. We must daily pray for them and teach them. This is our duty and our privilege. The Holy Spirit wants to draw the entire family closer to God. He can do this powerfully through Bible study and prayer in family worships.

Often in our busy lives, we think there is no time for this. We must make it a first priority. Choose to do it and do not let anything stop you.

There were two families who both lived very busy lives. In the morning the parents left to go to work. All the children went off to school. In the evening they would all come back together.

The first family hurried to eat their supper, bathe and then sat in a circle. They visited about what had happened during the day. They sang songs, studied special lessons out of the Bible and prayed together.

The second family also hurried to eat their supper, bathe, but then lined up to stare at the television. They didn’t even bother to look at each another or speak together.

Which family do you want to be like? Surely choosing to have family worship brings great blessings for each member. Here are some ideas to help you have interesting family worships.

A Good Plan for Family Worships

1. Sing songs of praise to God. Talk about the meaning of the songs you sing. Sing out your love to God—this is worship.
2. Choose a story from the Bible and tell it in an interesting way or read a section of scripture.
3. Ask the family three questions:
 - What does this tell us about God?
 - What does it say that He wants us to do?
 - What are His promises for us today?You may want to highlight the special verses in the passage. Children often enjoy doing this in their own Bible.
4. Pray for each other.
 - In the morning pray about the day that is ahead. Ask God to transform your hearts. Claim the death and resurrection of Jesus to help you. Ask God to strengthen you to be kind to each other and to witness to others. Pray for specific needs that you will be facing that day. Also pray for the needs of specific people that you know.
 - In the evening pray about what happened during the day. Ask God for forgiveness for the sins committed. Claim the power of Jesus' blood and thank God for forgiveness. Say sorry to each other and tell God what you are thankful for.

Additional Ideas for Family Worship

- Let your children prepare worship. They can tell a story, act out a story or read some scriptures. Tell them in advance what day you want them to lead worship so they can prepare well.
 - Have each member of the family memorize scripture and recite it at worship. You can memorize it at a different time and present it at worship or you can work together on memorizing during worship.
 - Write down prayer requests in a book. Then when God answers the prayer, write down what He did. You can read the answers to remind you of God's goodness and power. It can look like this:
Date of Request: March 16
Prayer Request: Uncle to stop drinking
Date of Answer: May 12
Answer: Uncle no longer drinking and he is kind to his family!
-

- Have each member of the family think of something kind to do that day. They may choose to help extra around the house, or help a neighbor, or write a letter, etc. At the next worship you can talk about what happened.
- If your children are old enough to understand, you may want to read some of the newly translated books by Ellen White such as Steps to Christ, The Desire of Ages, and The Great Controversy.
- Try different things on different days. Sometimes go outside to a pretty place for your worship. On another day, spend the whole worship talking about what you are thankful for. Have a special time of prayer for leaders such as leaders of the government, church pastors, mission personnel, etc.



Apply it to Your Life

Remember that God Himself comes to your house each day. Will you welcome Him as a special guest or be so busy that you and your family ignore Him? He loves you and He wants you to spend time with Him as a family. Write down what time you will have family worship and what you will do this week from the

ideas above.



Plant Another Seed

When a new family becomes Christians, invite them to have family worship with you. Show them several times how you do it. Then give them an opportunity to lead. Let them lead the songs or tell a Bible story and answer questions. Encourage them to do this every day in their homes.

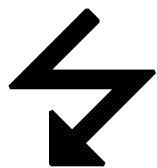
The Character of the Christian Witness

Grow every day to have a character more like Christ.

A delicious mango is a wonderful treat. The durian is entirely different from the mangostein, but both are so tasty. Almost everyone loves to eat fruit. There are also lots of weeds and thistles in the countryside. Nobody likes these. In the Bible sin is compared to weeds and a Christian character is compared to fruit. When we are connected to Jesus, we will naturally have the Holy Spirit in our lives and it will produce the fruit of the Spirit. This will bless us and help those who aren't Christians to see God's character and want to receive salvation.

Read Galatians 5:19-21 and list the weeds of sin:

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the fruit of the Spirit:



Apply this to Your Life

Some people seem very nice at their work place but are unkind at home. Other people are polite to their boss, but unkind to those who work under them. These types of people seem to be like fruit that is partly sweet and partly rotten. We do not want to be like that! Let us live like Christ in our homes, our work and our neighborhoods.

To become more like Christ, we need to apply the fruits of the Spirit to the different areas of our lives. Under each question below, list the fruits that the person especially needs. Describe the actions of a true Christian in each situation.

1. A Christian father and husband (or a mother and wife).
 - A) How will he act when his children disobey?

 - B) How will he act towards women that are not his wife?

 - C) How will he be when there is not enough money in the home?

 - D) What will he do around the house to be helpful?

2. A Christian at his work.
 - A) How will a businessman treat his workers when they make mistakes?

 - B) How will a seller in the market treat her customers?

 - C) How well will a carpenter or laborer do his work?

3. A Christian in his neighborhood.
 - A) What would he do if the neighbor is sick?

 - B) What should he do if his neighbor is mean to him?

 - C) How can he help his community?

How to Become More Christ like

Sometimes it seems very hard to be like Jesus. We do not feel loving towards our neighbors. We get impatient with our children and angry with our spouse. We fail to be kind and generous at work. What should we do?

Read John 15:4-5. What did Jesus say will happen if we are close to Him?

Jesus said that if we are in a close relationship with Him we will naturally bear fruit, becoming like Him. God has promised to fill our lives with the Holy Spirit. Take courage and know He will help us. Ask God to fulfill His promise in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” Praise God! He is able to make us like Christ in character through the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18. What does God say we should do in order to become transformed into God’s glory?

Take time every day to focus on Jesus’ life and God’s character. Read the Bible and think about the stories. Spend more time thinking about those qualities in which you especially need to grow. You will find yourself becoming more like Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and you will become a greater blessing to your family, your work and your neighborhoods.



Plant Another Seed

You surely have friends who have some bad habits or characteristics. As they see Jesus in your life they will want to know how God has changed you. Share with them how to look at Jesus’ life and apply it to the family, work and neighborhood. Show them how to focus on the stories of Jesus that show the qualities they are lacking.

Chapter
8**Replacing Lies with
the Truths of Gods'
Word**

Recognize and reject wrong thoughts and lies which come from Satan, evil angels, other people and our own minds. To replace these thoughts with the truths of God's word.

Satan and his evil angels want to destroy us so they attack our minds. They often whisper bad thoughts and lies to us such as “God doesn’t really love you,” “You’ll never make it to heaven,” “You can’t be a good leader.”

Read John 8:44. What did Jesus call Satan?

Sometimes we hear these lies from people. Our parents may say, “You are so stupid. You will never succeed at anything.” When we believe these words, they are very powerful, like a curse. They can cause us many problems.

If we believe these thoughts and focus our minds on them, we will become discouraged and fail in our Christianity.

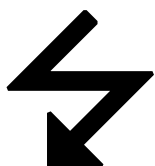
Read Proverbs 23:7. What affect does our thinking have on our life?

God doesn’t want wrong thoughts to hurt us. The Holy Spirit has been promised to lead us into all truth. This includes right and helpful thinking. He wants us to fill our minds with truths such as “God loves you no matter what you’ve done,” and “I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me.” Jesus came to this world to show and tell the truth.

Read John 8:31-36. What can the power of God's word do for us?

God has a plan to help us overcome the temptations from evil angels and our own wrong thoughts. Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. What does God want us to do?

We must take our every thought and ask, "Is this true according to God's word?" If it is not, we must surrender it to God and replace it with what God says. God has promised that the Holy Spirit will work mightily to lead you into all of God's powerful truth for you (John 16:13). Here is a plan to help you do this.



Apply this to Your Life

- A. Examine the lies below to see which ones you have thought or felt.
- B. Read the Bible verse next to it and write the truth of the text above the lie.
- C. Cross out the lie while you say, "I reject this thought because it is a lie."
- D. Write the texts out on note cards and carry them with you until the bad thoughts go away and God's truth is firmly in your mind.
- E. Memorize the texts that you especially need to replace the lies you used to believe.

Continue to search for other promises in God's word that correct the lies and wrong thoughts that go through your mind.

<u>THE LIES THAT WE MUST REJECT</u>	<u>THE TRUTH</u>
1. I am all alone. I am abandoned.	Hebrews 13:5
2. I have no friends, nobody likes me.	John 15:15
3. I am shameful and dirty.	Titus 3:3-5
4. God won't answer my prayers.	1 John 5:14-15
5. He can't forgive me.	1 John 1:9
6. I'll never make it to heaven.	Philippians 1:6

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 7. I am afraid because bad things always happen to me. | 2 Timothy 1:7 |
| 8. God doesn't love me. | Jeremiah 31:3 |
| 9. My body is disgusting. | 1 Corinthians 3:16 |
| 10. I can't overcome this sin. | 1 Corinthians 10:13 |
| 11. I am stupid | James 1:5 |
| 12. I enjoy the sin of _____. | 2 Corinthians 5:17 |
| 13. My life is difficult so I cannot help being sad | Isaiah 61:1-3 |
| 14. I'm always sick. I guess that's God's will for me. | 3 John 2 |
| 15. My life is never going to get better. | Romans 8:28 |



Plant Another Seed

Now that you have learned the joy of replacing lies with God's truth, help your friends and family members experience the same. Share with them how God has helped you and show them the Bible texts that match their struggles and the bad thoughts that they have.

The Power of Prayer

Know the importance of prayer and pray confidently to God about all of our needs and others' needs while also remembering to thank and worship God.

What is the Meaning of Prayer? Prayer is a Conversation with God. Praise God's glory, tell Him your joys and sorrows, ask for what you need for yourself and for others and give thanks to God. Prayer is a simple, ordinary conversation with God like we can speak with our parents. In some languages it is best to speak with God using the respectful royal language, but if we don't know how to do this we can talk to Him using ordinary language. God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to help us be able to pray effectively (Romans 8:26). Let us study to learn more how to talk to God who is both like a mighty king and a trustworthy parent.

How to Pray

We can compare prayer to the way children and parents talk with each other. How do you talk to your parents or how do your children talk with you?

- Children call their parents by the names, "Mother" or "Father."
- Children talk about what they are happy about.
- Children tell their parents what they have done and what they want to do.
- Children ask their parents for anything they need for themselves or for their friends.
- Children say thank you and show their appreciation.

We can learn from the points above how we can talk with God.

Read Matthew 7:7-11. What did Jesus say God is like?

We can call God by the name, “Our Father who is in heaven.” We can talk to God like we talk to our parents. We know our parents are happy to hear us say, “Mother” and “Father.” God is also like this. This gives us confidence and faith to come to God in prayer. We can use other names that also describe His love and show our respect to Him.

Read Philippians 4:4. How often should we rejoice?

Praise God. God has many wonderful characteristics that we should praise. For instance He created everything. Our parents like to hear us praise them. God, who is all loving and almighty doesn't need us to praise Him. However, He is happy when we recognize His power. It is also a very nice practice to say a short prayer of thanks for food each time before we eat.

Read 1 John 1:9. What does God say we should do in prayer when we have sinned?

It is hard to say we are sorry when we have done wrong. But doesn't every parent like to hear his children apologize? Doesn't it make the family happy again when we say the words “I'm sorry” and “I forgive you.” This is a very important part of prayer. We should specifically tell God what we have done wrong and ask for His forgiveness. We should also ask Him to change us and empower us to do what is right.

Read Philippians 4:6-7. What should we do when we have troubles?

Tell Him about the happiness in your heart and the sorrows you have faced. Ask God for what you need, such as wisdom, food, clothing, for a kind heart and to escape temptations.

God already knows about our troubles, but He wants us to feel our need and to come close to Him, sharing what's on our hearts. He delights to answer those who feel their need of Him. He promises in Psalm 34:18 “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and save such as have a contrite spirit.”

Let's remember that we can pray to God anytime and any place even while we are riding a bicycle or working. We can offer a quick prayer to God in our mind while in the midst of an argument with someone.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1. Who does God want us to also pray for?

What should we pray about? Pray that they will have good health or recover from sickness. Pray that they will have enough food. Pray that they will come to believe in Jesus and receive His forgiveness. God can help us with all these things, including financial problems.

Finally, you should thank God by asking for all these things in the name of Jesus. To pray in His name means to pray through His power.

When you finish praying you can say the word “Amen” or a local words which has the same meaning of, “May it happen just as we’ve said.” We say this to show that our hearts are fully behind what has been said.

In order to see clearly God’s answer we can make a chart like the one below, putting the day you asked and the day when God answered.

<u>Date Requested</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Date Answered</u>	<u>Answer</u>
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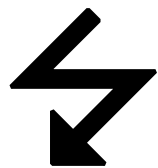
What if God Doesn’t Answer Your Prayer?

If you don’t see the answer to your prayer, don’t stop praying. Remember, God is like a parent. God doesn’t want to give us anything that will hurt us. Sometimes it’s not the right time for what we ask for. Sometimes we are not asking for something that is God’s will.

Read 1 John 5:14-15. As you keep praying, God will show you what is His will and then you will know that He will surely answer your prayer.

Read Psalm 66:18. What else can prevent God from answering our prayers?

God will not listen to our requests if we are holding on to sin. But He will always hear our prayer when we ask for forgiveness. He promises in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”



Apply this to Your Life

Right now, stop and take time to pray to God using the things that you have learned.

1. Call God your Father and tell Him the things you appreciate about Him. Give Him thanks for the good things He has done for you.
2. Confess your sins. Ask Him to forgive you and transform you.

3. Tell Him about the problems you face and the needs that you have.
4. Ask God to help other people. Pray specifically for those you know that are in need and also for leaders of your country and church.
5. End your prayer “in the name of Jesus” remembering His power and love for you.



Plant Another Seed

Now that you are experiencing the joy of a conversation with God, you can help others pray with confidence and faith. Teach them that God is a loving Father who wants to hear them. Pray for them and encourage them to pray aloud with you, even if they can't use as nice of words as you. This will help them build confidence to pray alone and with others.

Chapter 10

Prayer for the Sick

Pray effectively for the sick in order to help them have physical healing and a saving relationship with God.

Do you remember a time when you were sick? Who cared for you and helped you get well? We remember very clearly those who showed kindness to us when we felt miserable. Their compassion touched us deeply. When our friends and neighbors are sick, we have a great opportunity to show them God's love by helping them and praying for them.

Read 3 John 2. What does this text say about God's attitude toward the sick?

Jesus' life showed us that God has great pity for the sick and is very pleased to heal them. People flocked to Him from everywhere and He gladly healed them.

Read Mark 16:15-18. Does God want to heal the sick through His disciples today?

This promise should give us great hope and faith that God can still do miracles today. As we meet people who are sick, we should teach them about God and help them look up to God for healing and help. Tell them stories about Jesus and how He helped people. Tell them testimonies of what God has done in your country. Pray for their healing. When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus people were healed and we can know that the same Holy Spirit wants to work through us today (Luke 4:18).

How Should We Pray?

1. Read Mark 5:25-34. What did the lady have that made it possible for Jesus to heal her?

We should take every problem to God and trust Him to do the very best thing for us. We should confidently ask God for healing and hope that He will. God does great things where there is great faith.

2. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Does God always heal people?

We do not demand God to heal the sick. We should use Jesus' words, "not my will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). Sometimes it is God's will that the person rest by dying (Revelation 14:13). We can pray, "Lord you know this person. Jesus died for him. Your love for him is great. If it is for Your glory and for their good, we ask in Jesus' name that he be healed. If it is not Your will, please give him strength and comfort."

3. Read James 5:14-18. What does God say we should do when a church member asks us to go and pray for him?

We are told that those who are sick should also ask God to forgive their sins. Sometimes a person is sick because he has bad health practices. A man may have liver problems because of drinking alcohol. Some people have ulcers and heart problems because they have no peace. Their sins, their hateful thoughts and their worries actually make them sick. Some sicknesses come because of the attack of evil spirits.

We can gently ask them "Why do you think you are sick?" We can tell them that any time a person is sick he should ask God, "Is there any sin in my life that needs to be surrendered?" and "Is there any bad habit that should be changed?"

It is important to do this. God cares about the person and wants them to stop any practice that is hurtful to them. God wants everyone to receive the peace that forgiveness brings. He does not want to just heal them for a few years and have them die. He wants them to live forever. This is why we should help them confess their sins to God.

Do not make the person feel guilty just because he is sick. Not everyone is sick because they have sinned. Some diseases come because of infections, from just living in a sinful world. A disease like AIDS can come to a wife by her husband's sin, not her own.

It is also important that we not have a special prayer for their healing if they are also asking traditional healers for help. Why is this? Often traditional healers depend on evil spirits to help them. If we seek God for healing and the person is

healed, many times he will think the help came from the traditional healer and he will not come into a saving relationship with God.

James 5:14 says we should anoint the person with oil. This oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The oil is not magical in anyway. We can use ordinary vegetable oil. Place a little oil on the sick person while you pray. In the Bible anointing someone with oil is a symbol of setting them apart to serve God. When we do this we are asking God to show His power by healing them or giving them courage during their illness.

If we pray in these ways for the sick, God promises in James 5:15 “the Lord will raise him up.” God has three ways to heal a sick person.

- A) God heals quickly and miraculously as in the Bible stories.
- B) God heals slowly through the natural remedies He has given in nature and in the body. This too is His miraculous power, for it is God who gives life and healing.
- C) God will heal a sick Christian who has died, when He resurrects him and gives him a new body at Jesus’ second coming.

Continue to Care for the Person

If God immediately heals the sick person we can join them in their joyful praise. Then we should teach them more about the God who has helped them.

If God does not heal them quickly, we should do anything else we can to help them get well. We can use natural remedies that we know about. The more they learn about God’s healthy way of living, the better they will feel. We can take them some healthy food. We should take them to the hospital if they need that.

We can continue to pray for them, asking God for healing. The more they look to God, the more they will experience His power. Even if their sickness does not go away, they will become stronger spiritually. Reading scripture promises and singing songs can also encourage them. Let us remember that the Bible says, “A joyful heart is good medicine” Proverbs 17:22.



Plant Another Seed

Encourage new Christians to pray about their sicknesses and to learn health principles so that they will have good energy to serve God. Take them with you when you go to pray for someone. Prepare your hearts together and help the sick together whenever you have a chance. Then there will be more people who know how to share God’s love in your community.

Chapter 11

How to Pray for the World

Pray for the salvation of the world.

Jesus Often Prayed for Others
Read Luke 22:31-34.

- What were the struggles that Peter was facing?
- What did Jesus do to help him?

Jesus loved Peter deeply. He knew that Satan wanted to destroy him. Jesus prayed for Peter and though Peter denied Jesus, he repented and became a great witness for God. Jesus knew the power of prayer. Sometimes He prayed all night (Luke 6:12-13). The night before He was crucified He spent much time praying for His disciples (John 17). Since prayer for others was such a major part of Jesus' life, it should be a very important part of ours. God promises to give us the Holy Spirit whom He calls "the Spirit of intercession."

What Should We Pray About?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-3. For whom does God want us to pray?

Read verse 4. What does God want us to pray about?

This text summarizes God's deep desire to have everyone receive salvation. He wants you to earnestly pray for your neighbors, your country and its leaders to know God as their Savior. Talk to God about everyone you see. Pray by name for the people you know who need to become Christians.

Read John 17:20-23. What did Jesus say would convince the world that God had sent Jesus and truly loves them?

Jesus prayed for His followers to be unified. He knew that if they really loved each other the world would see His love. Pray for yourself and the church members to love each other like Jesus loves you.

Read Acts 4:29-31.

What did the disciples pray for?

What happened when they prayed?

We are to pray for the Holy Spirit to fill us. The world needs to see miracles. Are you asking God to heal the sick, cast out evil spirits, and give people dreams and visions? The world needs to hear Christians speak with earnest love and boldness? Are you asking God to give you words to say that will reach those who have been the hardest to reach? Ask! Believe! God wants to move.

Read Colossians 4:2-3. What did Paul say we should pray for?

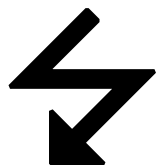
When you wake up in the morning ask God to give you a chance that day to share the mysteries of Christ with people who are not Christians. Then be watchful all day, continuing to pray for God to open up opportunities to share. If you pray and watch, He will use you every day.

Read Matthew 9:36-38. What did Jesus tell His disciples to pray for?

Everywhere Jesus looked He saw people in need. His heart was eager to help them. Today there are thousands around us that we can not reach alone. Pray that God will stir the hearts of Christians in your church and elsewhere to serve God and lead people to Christ.

In summary we can see that God has called us

1. To pray for everyone to receive salvation.
 2. To pray for the church to reflect Christ's character.
 3. To pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to work miracles and empower our
witness.
 4. To pray for daily opportunities to share.
 5. To pray for more workers to witness.
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Apply this to Your Life

Let's take time to pray now, knowing that our neighbors and our nation will be drawn to God. First, write below a list of people that you want to pray for.

Pray through the following prayer, claiming God's promises for these people. Place their names in the blanks below. This prayer is an example of how you can use God's promises while you are praying. 1 John 5:14-15 says, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." If we pray accord to His promise, He will surely answer.

Dear Father in Heaven, You are the God of all nations. You have told us in Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" Psalm 46:10. We bow before You humbly now and praise Your name. There is no other God like You. Only You created all things. Only You have sent Your Son Jesus to die for the sins of all the world. May Your name be exalted in our nation.

You said in 1 Timothy 2:4 that You "desire all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Please fill our hearts with Your love and empower us to pray for them. In specific we are asking You to save _____ . You promised that You would send the Holy Spirit "and when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Please convict _____ now.

Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself" (John 12:32). Please work in our hearts and in our church so that Jesus is lifted up in our lives and then _____ will be drawn. Give us unity and deep love for the lost.

In Luke 11:13 You promised "how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" We ask now for the Holy Spirit. Please give us love and boldness to speak to _____ for You. Please do miracles so that _____ will believe.

You said, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Psalm 32:8). Please give me opportunities today to care for and speak to _____ and anyone else You send my way.

You have promised that when Jesus returns You will have redeemed a “great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9). Raise up more workers to finish the work. Let Your kingdom come!

Finally Lord, we claim Your promise in Jeremiah 33:3, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” We ask You to do incredible things to lead the world to salvation. Work in us and through us. In Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.



Plant Another Seed

Matthew 18:19-20 promises that when two or three come together God is especially there. Call other Christians to regularly join you in praying through this lesson, claiming the promises of God to reach the world with His love. Make a list of people to pray for and lift them up to God together.

Chapter 12

How to Deal with Evil Spirits

Set people free from Satan and evil spirits through the power of Jesus.

Many people are bothered by evil spirits. Many others are afraid of them. We do not need to be afraid of the evil spirits. They have less power than the true God who made all things. Jesus showed great power over them. First He Himself conquered all temptations that Satan brought to Him. Second, He easily cast out evil spirits who were controlling people. Often the spirits cried out in fear when Jesus came near.

1. Be Confident in Jesus' Power.

Read Mark 9:14-29. When no one else could help the boy who was possessed, who helped him?

Read Mark 16:17. What did Jesus say His disciples would be able to do?

All the evil spirits were at the cross trying to overcome Jesus and prevent Him from saving us. Read Colossians 2:15. What does it say Jesus did?

Jesus overcame all of them and took away their weapons! You may want to memorize this text and remind yourself that every evil spirit you will meet has already been overcome by Jesus.

Let us be confident in Jesus' power and go forward to help the prisoners of Satan receive freedom. Jesus cast out evil spirits by the power of the Holy Spirit and that same Holy Spirit has been given to us (Matthew 12:28).

2. Make Your Relationship with God Strong.

Humans have less power than the evil spirits. If they are not connected with God they cannot overcome them. God has enough power, but if our connection with Him is not strong, then He cannot use us to overcome the evil spirits. It is similar to the house that is too far away from the generator. The generator is powerful but because the house is not connected well, the electricity is too weak to power the lights or the fan. We must come close to God to have His strength to help others.

Remember the story about the demon-possessed boy? Why couldn't the disciples cast the evil spirit out?

Read Mark 9:28-29 again and write Jesus' counsel to help us be able to overcome evil spirits through God's strength.

It is also likely that the disciples were harboring the sin of jealousy and selfishness in their hearts, since they had been left behind when Jesus took just three of the disciples on a special trip. We need to ask God to cleanse us from sin so that we can effectively help others. Jesus had spent the night in prayer and meditation on the scriptures. When He came to the boy with the evil spirit, Jesus was already prepared to go into battle.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18 often because it is a very important passage which shows the armor God has given us so we can overcome the enemy. We must be sure of our own salvation, have Christ's righteousness in our lives, follow the truth, be ready to share the Gospel of peace, know and use God's word, be a person of prayer and most of all be full of faith. Ask God for this armor each day and He will give it to you and you will be able to overcome the evil spirits.

3. Call on God for Deliverance

When someone has problems with an evil spirit, it is best for you to go with at least one other Christian if possible. First ask God for protection from accident or harm for all of you, requesting God to put His protection around the person to prevent other evil spirits from assisting. Then pray for the person, earnestly calling on God to free them. Then speak clearly to the evil spirit commanding it to come out in the name of Jesus. Be bold, be confident. Do not fear anything.

You may wish to say, "Because Jesus Christ has power over all evil spirits and because He has died for this person's sins and has risen again to save him, I command you to leave." The Bible does not give any special words that must be said. There are no special actions required. There is no need to shout. Speak calmly, quietly, confidently. We should not shake the person, but show

gentleness. We are simply to pray and to command with faith in the One who is strong—Jesus.

Some people have been using the symbol of the cross as a way of scaring off evil spirits. Do not be deceived, the cross does not scare evil spirits, it is the power released when calling on the name of Jesus Christ that sends the evil spirits running.

4. Do Not Give Up

Sometimes the evil spirit will leave quickly. Other times, perhaps because of our lack of faith it will take a long time sometimes hours. For some it has even been days. The evil spirits are like leeches. The evil spirit may try and distract you, make you afraid and make you give up, but do not give up. Sometimes the person will be violent to make you afraid. Sometimes they will make the person act like an animal. You can restrain the person from hurting himself or you by calling on Jesus. You can move away sharp objects or provide a pillow if necessary.

Other times the evil spirit will make the person sleepy so that you think he needs to rest and you might want to leave him alone. But do not let him sleep. Wake him up and keep praying until the spirit leaves. To each distraction say, “In the name of Jesus, stop it.”

The spirit may make him try to move all around and distract you. Keep persisting. It may make him nauseous and throw up. Do not be distracted. Continue to command it to come out and claim Jesus’ power. Evil spirits are deceptive and may pretend they have left. They might say, “Why are you all here? Nothing is wrong. You can go now. I’m fine.” If this happens, pray for God to give you discernment to know if the spirit has left or not.

Sometimes the spirit will try to get you to talk to it. Many people are curious and want to see what the spirit knows. But God has told us to not communicate with evil spirits. We are only to use God’s word of authority to send them away.

The evil spirit may promise to leave if you give it what it asks for such as food, water, a house, etc. Do not give them what they ask for.

In order to help you persist you should sing and quote scripture. This helps because the evil spirits hate it and will want to leave. It also helps to encourage the Christians who are praying.

God will give you the victory! “You dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” 1 John 4:4.

5. Remove Openings for Spirits

After the evil spirit leaves, tell the person that evil spirits do not want to leave and will try to come back. Show them that they must keep them out by removing spirit houses, charms and anything that is connected to the evil spirits. These are an open door for them to come into the person's heart. Removing them is a sign that a person is trusting in Jesus instead. If the person or family is willing, remove and burn the items before ordering out the spirits.

The person and the family members are more likely to be willing to do this once they have seen that Jesus has power to help them. You may help them remove them or do it for them if they are afraid but willing. But encourage them to do it themselves if possible. You do not want them to be afraid to be there when you aren't there. The power is in Jesus, not in you.

Lead the people to break all agreements with the evil spirits. Have them say, "Through the blood of Jesus, I ask for forgiveness for my connection with evil spirits and I choose to break all connections with them. Please come and live in my heart."

Read Ephesians 4:26-27. What does the Bible say can open the door for Satan?

This shows clearly that you must help them be free from sin so that evil spirits cannot easily come in. Sin opens the heart's door. Confession and repentance closes the door. If people have participated in ceremonies that are related to evil spirits, they should also confess these and turn from them. This is the way to lock the door.

6. Lead the Person to Receive Jesus

Read Matthew 12:43-45. Once the evil spirit is chased out, who should come and live in the person's heart?

Tell him that he runs a great risk if he doesn't have someone stronger than the evil spirits in his heart. Even if the person sets his life in order, doing good things, if he doesn't have Jesus he will be unprotected and more evil spirits will come than before. Lead him to pray as follows:

"Lord of all, thank You for Your mighty power which has freed me from the spirits. I do not want the spirit to be in me any more. Please come and cleanse my heart from all sin. Forgive me and transform me. Please come and live in my heart and be my Lord. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

7. Lead Him to Reject the Evil Spirit's Advances

Teach him to pray the above prayer every day and especially when he feels the evil spirit may be trying to come back to him. Tell him that he simply needs to say, "I

rebuke you evil spirit. I am Jesus' child. You have no more power over me. I love Jesus.”

Help them to stop doing anything else that is related to evil spirits such as visiting fortune-tellers, reading horoscopes, playing games that involve spirits, watching videos or television programs that deal with the occult or teach that people who die can be spoken to. Tell them to speak out loud, “I choose to stop doing _____ and I break all ties with the evil spirits through the blood of Jesus Christ.”

Pray for them often. Remember this person is weak. They do not yet know how to claim God's promises and live by faith. You must be the one who helps them call out to God. Show them promises from the Bible, get them some scripture portions, teach them some songs. Show them how to put on God's armor from Ephesians 6:10-18 like you have done.

8. Involve the Church Members

Surround the person with other Christians to also pray with him and strengthen him. Explain to your church members what you know about spirit possession and God's method for victory. Teach them these steps, letting them know that all Christians have power over evil spirits, not just the leaders. You may want to post them on the wall for them to see often. Also everyone should rally around those who have cast out the spirits in order to pray for them. Often evil spirits will harass those involved in this ministry and make them sick or discouraged afterwards in order to keep them from wanting to be involved in this again. Encourage the person to continually praise God in song and prayer to gain the victory.

Read Luke 10:17-20. We must be careful to not boast or be proud when God has used us to overcome evil spirits. The power is only from God. What does Jesus say we should rejoice in?

Here is a final promise to remind us that the victory is ours in Jesus. Read Revelation 12:7-11. You may want to memorize it, especially verse 11. Let us praise God for His grace in saving us. Let us go forward with joy to share His freeing power with all.



Plant Another Seed

It is important that you help every new Christian be confident that Jesus is with him and that he doesn't need to be afraid of evil spirits. When you go to help someone who is having problems with evil spirits, take another Christian along with you so that he can grow in his faith in God. Before you go, prepare

P R A Y E R

your hearts together, asking God to cleanse you from sin and make you able to be used by God.



Chapter 13

Our Purpose in Light of Jesus' Coming

Know and follow God's purpose for Christians living at the end of time.

What are the two purposes in life?
Read Ephesians 1:4-6. Why did God make us?

God is like a Father and views each person as His child. He created humans because He delights to relate with them in love and faithfulness. He wants each one with Him for eternity.

God wants us to come to Him with our problems. He wants us to give Him honor, respect and thanks. He wants us to spend time with Him in Bible study and prayer, enjoying His presence.

1. Our first purpose is to be in a loving, honoring relationship with God now and forever.

Jesus summarized our second purpose in Matthew 28:18-20. Read this text. What did He say we should do?

This is His great commission to all Christians. We are to lead people to be disciples of Jesus, to have a relationship with God, to receive salvation and be baptized. We are to help them follow all that Jesus commanded.

2. Our second purpose is to lead people to be in an eternal relationship with God through salvation in Christ.
-

Is this command for all of us? Of course! It is not just for pastors or leaders. God does not want any of His children missing from heaven. He wants all of us involved in reaching out to every person we meet.

Isn't it wonderful to know why we were created and what we should do with our lives? These high purposes give us energy and enthusiasm for life. Let's memorize them and keep them before us in everything we do.

Our Purpose in Light of Jesus' Soon Coming

Jesus promised that He would return to end the suffering in the world and take us to heaven. He predicted many things that must happen before He returned. Most of the signs have already been fulfilled. His coming is very soon.

1. Read Matthew 24:14. What is the last sign that must yet be fulfilled before Jesus returns?

Nothing is more important than being ready for Jesus' coming and leading people to Christ. When Jesus returns there will be no more chance to decide to follow God. He is waiting to return because He wants us to be ready. Now is the time for us to share earnestly and to prepare ourselves for His coming.

2. Read Revelation 14:14-16. What does it mean that the earth will be ripe and Jesus will reap it? What does it mean when something is ripe?

When Jesus comes again, there will be only two groups of people—those on Jesus' side and those against. Those who fully belong to God will be taken to heaven. Those who have settled into evil will be destroyed by Jesus' holy glory. Every day people are making decisions that are ripening them into one of the two groups.

God is so eager to save everyone He can. He has sent three special messages and raised up a people to prepare the world for Jesus' coming. The messages are in Revelation 14:6-12, right before the text on the ripe harvest. They are called the three angels' messages.

3. Read Revelation 14:6. What are we supposed to preach to the whole world?

The good news is the wonderful salvation through God's mercy that brings forgiveness and transformation of our lives.

4. Read Revelation 14:7.

- What does it mean to fear God?

If we are holding onto our sins, we should be afraid of God's holiness. We do not need to be afraid of God's heart for it is full of compassion and mercy for sinners. We must respect Him greatly and turn from sin. The world needs to hear this now.

- What does it mean to give glory to God?

Only God has the mercy and the love to help sinners escape death. The world needs to know this. As we testify of what God has done for us, people will see His glory. All of our words, our attitudes and our actions can help people know God. Let us let Jesus fill our hearts, so our family and neighbors can see Him.

- What does it mean to worship the Creator God?

When people worship something, they depend on it to help them. They talk about its good qualities and they follow its demands. Many people are worshipping gods that cannot save them. There is only one God who made everyone and is their true Father. We are to teach people to worship Him alone.

How should we worship this God? God gave us Ten Commandments to tell us how to live. The first four tell us how to love and worship God. The last six tell us how to love other people. Jesus said that all these commandments could be summarized as love to God and love to people.

The fourth commandment specifically says that we are to worship the Creator by resting from our work on Saturday. We are to remember that we are alive because of God, not because of our work (Exodus 20:8-11). The world has forgotten who created them. Many Christians have forgotten that the Sabbath is one of God's ten most important commandments. God has called us to remind them since the Creator is returning soon.

The next two messages are in Revelation 14:8-12. We do not have time to study them now. Their main message is to call the people in the world away from the lies of Satan and to the truths of God's word. We are to prepare ourselves for a final great war between Satan and God. In this war Satan will be very deceptive and will try to use the countries of this world to force people to turn from the worship of God.

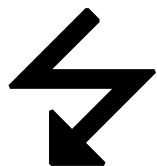
It is our job to warn people and teach them the truth. We must also be sure that we are prepared to stand through the difficult times ahead.

5. Read Revelation 14:12. What do we especially need to teach and live in preparation for Jesus' coming?

We are to teach people to have faith in Jesus, which means to fully trust Him to save us and help us. We are to show people that when we put our faith in Him, He transforms our hearts and gives us power to keep God's commandments.

Let us persevere in following Him and help everyone we meet to do the same.

God has raised up a church to proclaim this message and warn people to prepare for the coming of Christ. We call this church the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This name summarizes our purpose in light of Christ's return. "Adventist" means one who is preparing for the coming of Jesus. "Seventh-day" reminds us of the forgotten Sabbath which leads us to worship the true Creator God.



Apply this to Your Life

God has given you two purposes for your life. Write them here.

If it is your choice, write the words, "I surrender my life to serve God by receiving His salvation, living in a relationship with Him and helping others to do the same."

What does the name Seventh-day Adventist mean?

If it is your choice, write the words, "I choose to live and teach the three angels' messages as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian."



Plant Another Seed

Determine today to study diligently how to be ready for Christ's coming and how to share this message with others. These lessons are prepared to help you do that.

Chapter 14

Friendship Evangelism

How to be a good friend to the people around you and have your kindness help them to know God as Savior and Friend.

There are many lonely people in the world. Some are deeply sad because a close friend or family member has died. Others are hurt and angry because they have been betrayed by someone they thought was their friend. Even many people who act happy feel lonely inside. They long for true friends who really care for them.

God loves them and wants to comfort their hearts. He wants to use each Christian to share His love through friendliness and help. If we will be a good friend to those around us they may come to know God as their friend and find salvation. Studies have been done around the world asking the question, "Why do people become Christians?" The most frequent answer is, "My friend helped me to know God." Let us learn to be good friends to help people with their loneliness and to introduce them to God.

What is a Good Friend?

Jesus was a true friend to everyone He met. Look up the texts below and write a few qualities of a good friend that you see in Jesus' life.

Matthew 9:10-13

Matthew 4:23-24

Luke 22:31-32

Jesus was friendly to everyone. He cared about them even if they had done wrong. He prayed for them and helped them. He was faithful and dependable. Every Christian needs to do the same. We should daily ask God to fill our hearts so that we will be loving and make friends with those around us. We are the friend through which they will know God.

Jesus' way of reaching people was perfect. "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."

"There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit" (Ministry of Healing, p. 143).

More Ideas on How to be a Good Friend

Read Ephesians 4:29-32. Write down some other qualities of a good friend.

It is very important that we be honest and do the things that we say we will do. We should be careful never to gossip since this makes our friends feel unable to trust us. The more our lives reflect God's character, the more they will believe the words we say about God. Read God's word often and ask Him to make you a better friend and witness for Him.

How to Make New Friends

Some Christians are so busy with their friends in the church and their own family that they never take time to make new friends. If we know that friendship is the way many people come to know God, we should try to make new friends with those who are not Christians.

There are many things you can do to start new friendships.

- You can smile.
 - You can learn and remember his name.
 - You can ask him about his family, his school or his work.
 - You can show interest in anything he tells you.
 - You can share about yourself without talking too much.
 - You can invite him to do something with you, like go for a walk.
 - You can help him with any problems he has.
-

Close relationships develop when people find common interests such as hobbies, jobs, school subjects, etc. When you meet someone new, think of things you can do together. Go back and visit him soon to help the friendship grow. Your friendship will grow as you care about him.

Think about your neighborhood and where you work, shop or walk. Who do you see every day that is not a Christian and is not yet your friend? Write their name or a description of them here:

Write down some ideas of what you can do to make a friendship with each of them.

Before you leave your home every day, ask God to send people across your path that need a friend. Watch for the people that He will send. God will open many doors for you to share His love and people will come to know God through you.

People especially need friends when they are going through a crisis. You can help people a lot if you will befriend them when they are sick, have had an accident or have had someone close to them die. We are not to be people's friends just to get them to become Christians. True love cares for them even if they never become a Christian.

Questions to Link to Spiritual Topics

As you make a closer friendship you will want to talk about spiritual things. We should not preach at them or speak too strongly. Sometimes it is hard to know what to say. Here are some questions that might help your new friend to talk with you about important matters.

1. Have you ever felt really afraid?
 2. What is one positive trait that your parents passed on to you?
 3. Why do you think children all around the world are getting so disrespectful?
 4. There is a lot of interest in health today. How is your health?
 5. What do you think is the most important characteristic of a good friend?
 6. Are you very religious?
 7. Have you ever been a monk? How was your experience?
 8. Have you ever been to a Christian church? What was it like?
 9. Do you think fortune tellers can really tell the future?
 10. Have you ever wondered why the world seems to be having so many problems with diseases, wars and natural disasters?
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11. What do you think will happen to our world?
12. What do you think happens when people die?
13. Have you ever wondered where the world came from?
14. Have you ever heard the story about Jesus

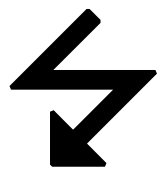
If he does not seem very interested, only share about spiritual things a little at a time. Keep praying for him and ask God to open the door to his heart.

There is another lesson in which you can learn to share your testimony of what God has done in your life. Introducing your friend to God is an important part of being a good friend. Sometimes we are too shy to talk about our beliefs. We are afraid they will stop being friends with us. But we need to remember that if we only keep their friendship and don't introduce them to God, they may miss out on heaven. How much better it would be to have them know God and be our friends forever.

A Friend in Passing

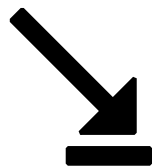
You can even be a friend just for a moment when you ride the bus or train, or when you sit in a restaurant or walk through the market, the park or an office. We should be friendly to all people, knowing every person is God's child and valuable to Him. We can briefly make a friendship using the methods above. Then we must pray for the right thing to say, and be courageous to share a short testimony with them. We should carry pamphlets with us so we can give one to them and encourage them to try and find a Christian near them to learn more. If we have a telephone number of a church or a Christian in the area they live, we should give it to them.

If we regularly see them, we can slowly make a friendship and at the right time, we can talk about God and give pamphlets and lessons. We can invite them to our homes, or visit their homes to make the friendship stronger.



Apply it to Your Life

Take time now to ask God to fill you with genuine love for your neighbors. Ask Him to show you just what you can do to be a good friend to those around you. Remember how much He loves each of them and let Him shine through you.



Plant Another Seed

Encourage the other church members to join you in befriending lonely people. Share this lesson with them. When you invite your new friends who are not yet Christians to your house, invite one other couple from the church. This will help friendship to grow and the love of God will be seen more and more.

Chapter 15

Every Member Can Serve God with a Spiritual Gift

Know your spiritual gifts and use them to lead people to Christ and strengthen God's church.

Imagine that your congregation is going to build a church. The church will be built using bricks, cement, tiles, wood, glass, steel, and aluminum. The church will also have electricity. If one man was to try to do this work on his own, it would be very difficult and take a very long time. For this reason you would surely call in many different tradesmen with different skills to work together. The work would be done quickly and well.

There is another work that takes many workers with various abilities. God is building His kingdom. He is building it by bringing the sinful multitudes in this world into a saving relationship with God. He wants people of all ages, ethnicities and personalities. In order to reach them He has chosen to use all of us with our many different abilities. None of us can reach them all. If only a few work it will take a long time.

Have you received salvation through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ? If you answer "yes," then God has already chosen you to help Him in reaching other people and building up of His kingdom.

Perhaps you are wondering what you can do to help. When we truly believe in Jesus as our Savior and are baptized, we receive the Holy Spirit. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. What does the Holy Spirit give to us?

The Holy Spirit gives us at least one special gift or ability to help us serve Him. As a member of God's team, you can know you have already received a special ability. The Bible refers to your special ability as a "spiritual gift."

Read Ephesians 4:12, 13. Why does God give us spiritual gifts?

Each spiritual gift you have provides you with a special opportunity to join with Jesus in serving your neighbor.

What is My Gift? Am I Carpenter or a Brick Layer?

If we are going to work under the directions of Jesus the Master Builder to reach the world and help strengthen God's people, we must first know what our spiritual gift is and second we must know how to use it.

Read through the following passages and list each spiritual gift mentioned.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30

Romans 12:6-8

Ephesians 4:11

Look through the list of spiritual gifts and pray that the Holy Spirit will show you which spiritual gift or gifts He has given to you. God has promised that the Holy Spirit will be your teacher. (John 14:26). Think about how you have served God in the past. What have you enjoyed doing that has helped others? Where have you been a blessing? This may show you your spiritual gifts. List anything that comes to your mind here.

If you are not sure which your spiritual gift is, find out by getting involved in many ways. Look for opportunities to serve others. Help in the church and in your community in any way you can. As you experience the joy of serving others and see God do good things through you, you will discover more clearly what your gifts are.

Here are some examples of things you might try doing.

- Visit the sick. Encourage them and pray for them.
- Help keep the church clean and beautiful, planting flowers and trees.
- Teach Bible stories to children or tutor them in their school subjects.
- Visit people who have stopped coming to church.
- Teach a Bible study.
- Fix food and take it your neighbors who are not yet Christians.
- Give your money to help a poor person start a small business.
- Sing songs for an elderly person who has few friends.
- Lead a youth group to clean up a dirty part of your neighborhood.
- Share the gospel with those who've never heard.

All the Gifts are Important

Do you sometimes feel that certain people are more important because they seem more talented? Do you ever feel that your abilities and gifts don't matter to God?

Some people instead feel they are very important because of the many things they have done for God. They look down at less talented people as not very special.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. What does this text say about the feelings described above?

It is quite clear that God values all of us and appreciates each person for the abilities he has. Let us love one another with Christ's love and help each other to serve God better.

Maybe you can see a special area of service that needs to be done in your congregation or community, but no one in your group has the appropriate gift. Paul taught us to pray for more spiritual gifts. Perhaps God will give this gift to whoever is earnestly asking God to use him. The more gifts we have in our church, the more of Jesus' love and power our community will see.

Why Should We Spend Time Helping Others?

Sometimes we wonder why we should bother to help others. Sometimes we don't feel we have the time or the energy. Let us remember we are doing this to bless God. Every person we meet is someone He wants as His child. He wants each of them to be in heaven. Let us reach out in love for God's sake and for the person's sake who may find salvation through us.

There is a personal benefit for us as well. Read Luke 6:38 and see what Jesus promises for those who use their talents and abilities to help others.

Our reward is to share in the eternal happiness of God. Your happiness will be found in the happiness of those you help and bless.

Kneel down right now and give yourself again to God. Ask Him to use your spiritual gifts, your abilities, your time and your words to build up His kingdom.



Plant Another Seed

God has gifted some people in His family, to especially assist others in finding and using their spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12). You also can encourage the other church members to find their spiritual gifts and use their abilities to help others both inside and outside the church. Go through this lesson with them.

Help them get involved serving others.

Chapter 16

Leading Unbelieving Family Members of Know God

Lead your family members to know God and experience His salvation.

You have experienced God's salvation and have the joy of a relationship with Him. Do you have some family members who have not yet joined you in following God? Surely you long for them to walk with God. You hope that one day they will be saved and then you will all be able to live together in heaven for eternity. This is also God's deep desire. This lesson will help you know how to partner with the Holy Spirit in leading your family to know Him.

God Used Joseph to Save His Family

The Bible tells an amazing story about a man named Joseph. If you have not read it, read it sometime in Genesis chapters 37-50. He was his father's favorite son among twelve sons and a daughter. His brothers were jealous of Joseph and sold him to some traders who took him to Egypt as a slave. The brothers lied to their father saying Joseph had been killed by wild animals.

Joseph remained faithful to God throughout the trials of slavery. He was thrown into prison for something he didn't do. God did not forget him. Instead God blessed Joseph with the ability to understand the King's dreams regarding a famine that would soon come and last seven years. The king placed Joseph in charge of saving grain to prepare for this disaster.

Read Genesis 45:1-18. This is the part of the story where Joseph reveals to his brothers who he is. They are afraid that he will take revenge and kill them. Read verses 6-7 again. What did Joseph say that God had done through him?

Joseph overcame jealousy, hatred, and trials in his family. He was used by God to save them. God also wants to use you in His plan to reach your family members so that they can know God for themselves.

Pray for Your Family

The first and most important thing you can do for your family is to pray for them. You can never convince or change anyone's heart. That is something only God can do. But you can pray. Review the lesson called "How to Pray for the World" and use these promises to pray for your family members by name.

Here is an additional promise you can pray for your children and others. Isaiah 49:25 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you and I will save your children.'" God is greater than Satan and every evil spirit.

Persevere in prayer. Do not give up. A wife prayed for her husband for 60 years. Six months before he died, he became a Christian. He wasted many years living apart from God, but through his wife's love and prayers, he died with the hope that when Jesus comes again he will be reunited with his wife and they will spend eternity together in heaven.

Live the Christlike Life

Your family will learn about God primarily through watching you. Read 1 Corinthians 7:12-14. What did Paul say can happen to the unbeliever when his spouse is a Christian?

You can help your family know God by letting Jesus shine through you. The Holy Spirit has promised to give you the fruits of the Spirit, which are the characteristics of Jesus. Every day, take time to read the Bible and ask God to make you like Him in the way you act at home. Here are some examples of how it will help.

Exodus 20:12 says, "Honor your father and your mother." If you are a young person and the only Christian in your home, you have a great chance to show God's goodness by your obedience and respect towards your parents.

One boy wanted to be baptized. His mother didn't want him to change religions. The boy's teacher asked the mother if her son was different since he had started studying the Bible and following Jesus. The mother said, "Yes. Now that I think about it, he has been much more obedient and helpful in the home." Soon she had convinced herself that it was a good thing for her son to become a Christian.

The same can be true for a husband or wife. The more faithful and helpful they become, the more likely the other family members will want to follow Jesus.

It can be very difficult for you to be Christlike if your family often gets angry with you for being a Christian. They may laugh at your beliefs and practices. They may push you to do what is wrong. They may even hit you or throw you out of the house. Though this can make you very sad, you should know that this is God's very opportunity to reach them. If you respond with love and patience, they will see God!

Read 2 Timothy 2:23-26. How should you act when you are mistreated?

When your family members see us respond with love, forgiveness and faithfulness they will know that what you believe is true. Some of them will choose to follow you.

Speak about God Joyfully but Tactfully

When a person first learns about God and experiences His love and power he wants to tell everyone. He eagerly shares with his family, but they often do not understand and are even upset. Why is this? Often the new Christian shares too much and in the wrong way. He learned a little at a time from someone who prayerfully and carefully shared with him. Now he is saying everything at once. He needs to share joyfully but tactfully.

You should not say, "I don't have to make merit any more because Jesus died for my sins and forgave me." This is true, but to your family it sounds like you are rejecting the idea of doing good deeds. Instead it would be better to say, "Since I have been learning about God, I have asked Him to change my heart so I can do what's right. I am so happy because He is truly changing me."

You should not say, "I will not eat pork anymore. The Bible forbids it." This is true, but it is said too strongly without explanation. Instead it would be better to say, "I learned today that the Bible has excellent health counsel that has saved many people's lives. Did you know it says pork is harmful and often causes sicknesses? Would it be all right for us to stop eating it?" This helps them understand the reasons behind what you are doing. If they don't want to change you might politely say, "Would it be too much trouble to set aside some vegetables before you add the pork?"

You should not say, "I will not worship any other gods. They are just idols." This is true but it will make people angry. Instead you can say, "I am so thankful for God. He has taken away my fear of death and evil spirits. I am so glad for His wonderful power." If you focus on God's positive attributes it will attract people more than if you attack their religion.

You can even affirm the good points about their religion and agree with everything that agrees with the Bible. They may say, “My religion teaches people to not be greedy since the things of this world all pass away.” You can add, “That is so good. It is very true that we shouldn’t think so much about this world. Instead we should focus on doing what’s right.”

God has a plan to reach our families. Read James 1:19-20. What does God counsel us to do?

If we will pray before we speak, God will give us just the words to say. Try to find a way to describe your beliefs and actions in ways your family will understand and appreciate. Focus on what you share in common and then gently and respectfully share what is new.

Involve Other Christians in Reaching Your Family

It is sometimes difficult to witness to a person’s own family. It is usually very hard for the younger to teach the older. For this reason you should ask church members to join you in sharing God’s love with your family.

You can invite them to pray with you for your family’s salvation. You can invite them to your home. An older church member may be the perfect one to make a friendship with your grandparents. Older people are more likely to receive respect and be listened to when they share the gospel. If your children aren’t Christians, you can involve them in activities with other youth from the church.

Prepare for Conflict

Eventually points of conflict will come. Your family may expect you to be part of a merit-making celebration. This would conflict with the truth that Jesus’ death is fully adequate for salvation. Still you want to please your family hoping to draw them closer to God. It is a time of crisis for faith, loyalty and witness. You must prayerfully consider what to do. Get counsel from other Christians to know what you should and should not do regarding the celebration and how to interact with your family.

Most celebrations have parts that are very religious and parts that are just social. Whenever you can, participate in ways that show your love to the people without compromising the commandments of God. Always keep in mind that your first loyalty is to the God who gave you life and saved you from sin. You are to worship Him only. However, the more you are helpful to your family and community in others ways, the less upset they will be when you don’t join in the religious practices. Explain briefly and humbly when the people question you.

You should pray a lot before you tell them about an important change you are going to make such as for baptism, Sabbath-keeping or other things that will be different from your family members' practices. Ask other church members for wisdom on what to say. Maybe some of them will go with you to help you explain to your family what you are about to do. God will give you wisdom and courage.

It is not easy to stand up for what is right. You may want to keep harmony with your family and neglect God's commands. But this is a great mistake. How can they know what is right if you neglect to show it because you are afraid of conflict? Some family members have made their decision to follow Christ only after seeing a brother or child take a stand for truth and sacrifice for the cause of Christ. If that person hadn't stood for God, the family member would never have seen how important God is.

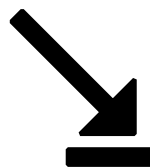
Read Matthew 19:29. What does Jesus promise to those who are rejected by their family for their beliefs?

The church is the extra family God has given you to strengthen you. Rejoice in them and enjoy them. They can truly support you through your difficult times at home. Together you can reach out to more and more family members and see whole families and even whole communities become Christian.

Make a list of family members that you want to reach with Christ's love. Pray for them every day, claiming God's promises. As you pray for your family, ask God every day the three questions from the lesson "Three Steps to Partnering with the Holy Spirit."

4. What do You want to change in me?
5. What do You want me to do?
6. What do You want me to say?

He will work mightily in their lives and will use you powerfully.



Plant Another Seed

As you witness to someone, think about his entire family. He may be the only one interested in knowing God right now, but do not only focus on him. Help his entire family to make friends with church members. Involve the rest of your family in doing things with his family. This is important in order to reach as many as possible. Talk to him about the needs of his family and pray with him for God to reach them all.

Chapter 17

How to Give Your Testimony

Tell your testimony effectively so that others learn about God's power and mercy.

You can Tell Others What God has Done for You.
Read Mark 5:1-20. After Jesus set this man free, what did Jesus ask him to do?

This man knew only a little about God. He did not have a chance to study the Bible or learn in a Christian school. Still Jesus asked him to go and tell what God had done for him. He went throughout the area of Decapolis (Ten Cities) witnessing. God wants the whole world to hear the good news about His power and mercy. He wants to use you to tell them. The most important thing you can say is what God has done for you.

Read Mark 7:31 and 8:1. The first time Jesus went to Decapolis the people didn't listen and asked him to leave. What happened after the man was set free and witnessed?

God used the one man to reach many and He will use you to reach many as you tell them what God has done for you. He has promised that the Holy Spirit will give us just what to say and speak through us (Matthew 10:19-20). God has done many things for us, but the greatest thing is that He has saved us from sin and given us eternal life and a new heart. This is the best news that we must tell!

Prepare Your Testimony

Read 1 Peter 3:15. Are you prepared to tell people what God has done? Take time right now to answer the questions below to help you prepare yourself to share with others.

1. What was your life like before you knew God?
2. How did you hear about Jesus?
3. What made you want to become a Christian?
4. How did you change when you accepted Jesus as your Savior?
5. How has God helped you since you became a Christian?

Share your testimony with another Christian. If someone is near you right now, practice on each other. If not, do it this week. This will encourage him and help you to gain experience. You can pray together that God will open doors to share with those who are not Christians.

When you tell your testimony remember:

- Pray a silent prayer that the person who is listening will understand and believe.
- Don't put down the person's religion, just lift up Jesus.
- If you know the person well, focus on areas of your testimony that you think match his needs, showing how God has helped you with the very needs he is facing.
- If he loses interest in what you are saying, keep it short and talk again about something he is interested in. Most people need to learn about God many times, but only a little at a time.
- Encourage him to learn more about God and to try praying about his needs.

Match Your Testimony to the People's Needs

Everyone has different problems and interests. These are the doorways to their hearts. If you want them to take real interest in Jesus, you must find a way to show them that He is exactly what they need.

First you must listen to the person long enough to know what interests them and what their problems are. The lesson on friendship evangelism will help you do that. We each need God's love in our heart to help us listen and care more about people.

Then at the right moment you can tell a story either about yourself or someone else that shows how God has helped a problem similar to theirs. You can briefly quote God's counsel or promise about their situation. You can say things like, "I'm so sorry to hear what you have been going through. That is very difficult. May I share with you a story of someone who was going through something similar?" Then tell them the story and what God has done. Or you might say,

“You have a very difficult challenge. I read something the other day that helped me with something similar. It said...” Then quote the Bible text that helped you.

Here are some specific examples of how to match testimonies to people’s needs:

1. Health problems of your friend.

Share a story of how God healed someone, or how a natural remedy helped the same situation, or how God gave courage and peace during the illness. Show Bible health principles. Psalm 103:1-5

2. Worries, fears or stresses that he faces.

Share a story of how God gave protection from danger, or of trust and peace in the middle of worrisome and stressful circumstances. Show Bible promises of peace. Isaiah 36:3-4

3. Hobbies, things he likes to do in his free time. What he reads or watches on TV.

Use illustrations and parables from the Bible or your own that match his interests. If you don’t know much about them, ask him questions and pray for wisdom on how to use his interests to draw him to God. Find Christian books or videos that match these.

4. Hopes and dreams he has for his future.

Share a story of how God helped fulfill someone’s hopes and dreams. Jeremiah 29:11-13

5. Habits he can’t break or promises that he can’t keep.

Share a story of God’s power setting someone free from a bad habit. 1 Corinthians 10:13;
1 John 4:4

6. Financial problems he is going through.

Share a story of how God helped someone have enough money, or blessed them for paying tithe. Share Bible financial principles. Malachi 3:10

7. His concerns for family members, parents, spouse, children.

Share a story of how God helped husband and wife reconcile, or children become obedient. Show Christian love principles. Proverbs 22:6

8. Spiritualistic items, practices, beliefs and fears.

Share a story of God’s power over evil spirits. Explain the great war between God and Satan. Mark 16:16-17

9. Grief he has gone through.

Share a story of God bringing comfort during grief and the hope of resurrection.
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

10. His own religion.

Affirm the morality of his religion and do not argue about how your religion is better, but keep sharing testimonies of how a personal God has helped you change and become more moral.

Collect Stories and Texts

Sometimes we forget a good story or can't remember where a certain text is found. It's a great idea to buy a book and write down good stories, parables, Bible promises and counsel for each of the ten areas above. Then you can easily find them to share in the future. You can also write down ideas you hear at church or from other Christian friends.

Remember, each time you are with someone who is not a Christian, the Holy Spirit is right beside you to help you. Simply pray in your heart, "What would You like me to say to him?" God will impress you what words, stories or testimonies to share.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:5-7. What has God promised to do through you?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:5. Write this text here and memorize it. Take courage and go share your testimony!



Plant Another Seed

Encourage new Christians to share their testimony with you. Listen carefully and tell them how wonderful it is what God has done for them. Urge them to share their testimony with their family and friends. Later ask them what God has done as they have shared their testimony. With a bit of encouragement you will see your church members influencing and helping the entire community.

Chapter 18

How to Tell God's Stories

Effectively teach people about God through stories and Bible texts.

The Bible says that sometimes people stood all day long listening to Jesus. How did He speak in such an interesting way? It was the power of the Holy Spirit upon Him and the deep love they could see in His face.

Read Matthew 13:34. What did Jesus use every time he spoke?

Jesus was such a good story teller that both adults and children, rich and poor liked to listen to Him. All His stories brought the powerful meaning of the gospel into ways they could remember and apply to their lives.

Read Matthew 13:52. You are a disciple of Jesus. Once you have learned the stories of God, what are you to do with them?

You should pray for God to give you the ability to tell His stories in a way that will draw people into a relationship with Him. He wants to use each of us to share His love wherever we go. It is the Holy Spirit who inspired prophets and apostles with the stories of the Bible. He will speak through you also.

How to Tell a Story Well

It takes practice to become an excellent story teller. Here are some steps that will help you.

1. Ask questions to discover the details. Choose a Bible story and read it carefully. Take time to imagine what the story was like when it happened. If you were there, what would you see? What would you hear and even smell? Think

about the different people in the story. Choose one person and imagine how you would feel and what you would think if you were him or her.

2. Think deeply about the meaning of the story. Use the questions from the lesson “Reading the Bible Brings Great Benefits.” In short they are:

- A) What does it tell me about God?
- B) What does it say God wants me to do?
- C) What promises does it give?

3. Write something to help you remember. Choose the main points from the story that you want the people to remember and follow. Use the story to make the point. The listeners will remember them better this way than if you just bring out the meaning after you tell the story. At first you may want to write out the entire story as you want to tell it. Or you may want to write an outline and include important details that you don’t want to forget.

4. Practice telling the story out loud. Some people find it helpful to practice in front of the mirror, talking to the dog, or sharing it with one or two people before telling a larger group. It is important to look at the people while you are talking to them. Ask them to tell you what you can do to improve.

5. Pray. You need much prayer for your preparation and for when you will tell the story. Ask God to help you express His love through your facial expressions and your words. Let your face show the feelings of the story such as joy when something happy happens or worry when there is a problem. Remember only God can change their heart, but He wants to use your words.

Practice Now

As part of this lesson, read the story of the healing of the leper in Mark 1:40-45. The story is told in just a few verses without many details. Follow the steps above.

1. Ask questions to discover the details.

- What do you think the leper looked and smelled like?
- How do you think the leper felt living away from his family and community?
- How do you think the people acted when this man came close?
- How did Jesus treat him?
- How do you think the leper acted after he was healed?
- What do you think was the reaction of his family and community?

2. Think deeply about the meaning of the story.

- What does it tell me about God?
-

- What does it say God wants me to do?
- What promises does it give?

3. Write something to help you remember. Include details and your main points.

4. Practice telling the story out loud. Choose someone near you and ask him if you can tell him a story since you are learning how to be a better story teller.

5. Pray. Pray together that God will make you powerful story tellers for Him.

Ideas for Teaching Bible Studies

You can follow the same process as above if you are using a set of Bible study lessons.

1. Read the lesson through carefully until you understand all the points.
2. Think about the meaning and ask God to help you apply the lesson to your own life.
3. Write down the points and stories you need to remember.
4. Practice the lesson.
5. Pray earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit.

A good teacher asks lots of questions. People don't like to just sit and be preached at. They like to be involved. You can tell a story and then ask them questions like the ones for the leper story above.

It truly helps to pray with your student before you teach and after you teach. When you pray at the beginning ask God to send the Holy Spirit to help each person understand. When you pray at the end ask God for forgiveness and for power to follow the things you have learned.

A Wonderful Promise

Read Matthew 10:18-20. Who is it that can give us the words to speak?

Before you tell anyone God's stories, plead for the Holy Spirit to fill your words. He will surely help you because He wants all these people to live in heaven with Him for eternity.



Plant Another Seed

The world is very big. It needs lots of people telling God's stories. You can help the other church members get excited about telling stories. Practice with each other in Sabbath school and church and in your homes. Pray together for opportunities throughout the week to share stories with those who aren't

Christians. Then on the next Sabbath share what God did as you told His stories.



Chapter 19

A United Church Shows God's Love to the World

Care for other Christians by living in unity and thus show God's love to the watching world.

Jesus chose twelve men to live and work with Him. This group could be called Jesus' first church. He planned to teach them and send them out to share His message and mercy with the world. But there was a big problem among them that threatened to break up this group and ruin their witness. It is a problem that many churches face today.

Read Mark 10:35-45.

- What did James and John want?
- How did the other disciples feel?
- What did Jesus say a person should be like if he truly wants to be great?

Jesus' disciples were so blinded by selfish ambition that they argued over which one of them would be the greatest in God's kingdom. This selfishness caused them to hurt each other and kept them from being effective witnesses to others. It also made Jesus very sad.

Doesn't this often happen in our world today? Governments are divided by various parties and waste much time and money that could help the poor. Neighbors sometimes won't work together because of jealousy or grudges. The home can be the happiest place, but when its harmony is broken it can become the worst place. Churches can also be full of gossip and division.

The Blessings of Unity

God has a better way. It is the way of unity. Unity brings peace and happiness. Unity accomplishes great things. Many hands working together can accomplish so much more than people who just live for themselves and their own families.

Unity helps children succeed. When the mother and father fight, the children often do poorly in school. Studies have shown that divorce makes it difficult for the children to succeed. God also wants us to have unity so that nobody will have their feelings hurt. He wants us all to treat each other kindly so that all will feel safe and loved.

Read John 17:20-23.

- What was the great burden on the heart of Jesus the night before He died?
- Why did Jesus say it was so important that His people be unified?

God wants the world to see His love. The world knows about God through Christians. If the Christians truly love each other and live in harmony, the contrast with the world's hatred and selfishness will be so great that people will come to believe in God. Each member must ask, "Am I living in unity? Can the world see God in how I relate to others?"

How Can We Become Unified?

Let's look again at the disciples to see how Jesus helped them find unity. The night before Jesus was crucified they met to celebrate the Passover. According to custom, one of them should take the role of servant and wash the others' dirty feet. That night they each sat still and refused to humble themselves for this humiliating task.

Surely Jesus' heart was deeply grieved by their selfishness and disunity. Read John 13:1-5. What did Jesus do?

Their respected teacher and Lord washed their feet. They were so surprised to see Him humble Himself like this. Read John 13:6-9. What was Peter's response?

Jesus showed unselfish love and humility. This is the key to having unity. Wherever people put aside their own desires and serve others, beautiful things happen.

Let's look carefully at how we can have this unity in our churches and in our homes. There are four important steps in Philippians 2:1-5.

1. Unite around the same purposes.
-

2. Unite through humility.
3. Unite through kind actions.
4. Unite through Christ dwelling in you.

1. Read verse 1-2. When people are focused on a common goal they are much more likely to work in unity. What are our two main purposes in life that we discovered in the lesson “Our Purpose in Light of Jesus’ Coming?”

If each member will focus on loving God and helping his family and church members be close to God, then the church will not be full of gossip and revenge! There will be unity.

2. Read verse 3. How should we view one another?

Many people are always trying to show that they are better than someone else. They try to feel important by demonstrating that they are smarter, richer or better looking. The Bible is clear that “all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God.” We have no reason to boast. Instead God asks us to be humble and consider others better than ourselves.

This is very hard because we like to feel important. When we think about our failures and weaknesses we feel bad. But when we know that God really loves us anyway, we feel much better. When we know we are valued by Him we don’t have to try and put others down to lift ourselves up. Appreciating and encouraging is much more enjoyable than criticizing.

3. Read verse 4. What does God ask us to do for each other?

If everyone in the home and in the church is trying to help each other there will be few problems if any. What a joy it is to be around children who are always looking for a way to help their mother. How sad it is to be in a church where people are pushing to get a certain position of responsibility. It is much better for each person to help the other discover his spiritual gifts and become effective in serving God.

4. Read verses 5-8. We are told to let Jesus’ mind be in us. How do these verses describe Jesus?

Jesus showed His great love by leaving heaven where He was praised as the mighty God. He greatly humbled Himself by becoming a human. He humbled

Himself more by serving others every day. He was even willing to die for them. Still more, He chose to die the very worst of deaths, the death on a cross.

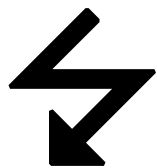
We are naturally selfish. We want to climb up higher in success and importance even if it means pushing others down. This is the character of Satan who tried to exalt himself in heaven. He fell to earth. We also fall into sadness and disunity whenever we serve ourselves.

The good news is that when we let Jesus into our hearts, His love fills us and we become like Him. Let us spend much time reading the life of Jesus and thinking about His beautiful character. Let us ask Him every day to fill our hearts, our homes and our churches. Then we will experience the incredible joy of harmony.

Jesus' disciples ran away when He was arrested. As they saw Jesus die for them and rise again, they came back together. They apologized to one another and humbled their hearts before God.

Read Acts 2:1. What was the relationship between the disciples when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them?

God will give us the Holy Spirit in a mighty way when we come into unity. We will see thousands converted by God's love among us. The Holy Spirit is the very One who can bring us into unity by drawing each of us closer to God and thus closer to each other.



Apply this to Your Life

Ask the Holy Spirit right now to show you where you have caused disunity and hurt.

Determine to go and apologize. Say "I'm sorry. Will you please forgive me for what I have done?" Even if the other person did most of the wrong, you can seek unity by apologizing for your part.

Look again at the four points and ask God to impress you what you can do to make your home, your church and even your neighborhood a place with greater harmony. What can you do to:

1. Unite around the same purposes?
 2. Unite through humility?
 3. Unite through kind actions?
 4. Unite through Christ dwelling in you?
-



Plant Another Seed

Share these ideas in your home. Talk together about how to have greater harmony and peace at home. Do the same thing with a group of members from your church. God will show you together how to live in such a way that the world will see His love more clearly.

Chapter 20

Forgiving Others Brings Great Benefits

Forgive those who have hurt you as Christ has forgiven you and be reconciled to them if possible.

Whenever there is a war in a country, soldiers plant landmines to protect themselves and to destroy the enemy. These landmines are hidden in different ways. They may lie quietly for years and then suddenly explode when someone comes too close. Landmines terribly injure, maim and even kill.

Jesus warned about a sin that is as dangerous as a landmine. It is something that may be hidden in a person's heart where no one can see it. It can lie quietly in the heart until something happens. Then the person may lash out with cruel words, hateful actions or even murder.

Read Matthew 5:21-22. What thoughts did Jesus say were as dangerous as murder?

Perhaps you have seen how thoughts of anger can boil under the surface. Someone says something unkind about his neighbor's child. The neighbor pretends it doesn't matter, but inside he is angry and the friendship is ruined. Sometimes the little problem grows into a big one.

In another home, a husband gambles and drinks. The wife nags him to stop, but he persists. Finally both of them explode with anger and they divorce. This hurts the children terribly.

Many people are hiding feelings of anger and desire for revenge. If they think about it enough, it can lead to terrible actions. Even if it doesn't, anger and hatred keep people from being close to each other. They may think about it so much

that they develop an ulcer or some other type of sickness. This can even happen in the church between members. Perhaps you have struggles with this too. What should we do about our feelings of anger, hurt and upset?

Landmine Removal for Peace and Safety

There are organizations that come in to remove the landmines that are hidden in fields and in jungles. They have a very dangerous and difficult job. Some workers have even died as they try to make a country safer.

Jesus knows how to remove the landmines of hatred and anger. His main tool is forgiveness. The power of the Holy Spirit is earnestly working to bring church members back together by transforming their hearts and strengthening them to forgive one another. He wants to show God's mercy to the world by helping Christians forgive readily.

Read Matthew 18:21-35 to study Jesus' way to bring us harmony and peace.

1. Who is the king in the story a symbol of? What has this King done for us?
2. What bad thing did the unforgiving servant do?
3. What will happen to those who do not forgive others?

It is very clear that it is dangerous to keep anger and hatred in our hearts. We must forgive each other. It is hard to do this. Are you convinced that it is worth it?

What are the benefits of forgiving others?

- Peace in our own hearts and freedom from worry.
- Close relationships with other people.
- Better health.
- God will forgive us.

How Can We Forgive Others

Here is Jesus plan to help us be free from anger, hatred and revenge. Think about someone you need to forgive and take time right now to go through the steps below.

1. **Talk to God about your hurt and anger.** You must not keep our anger hidden like a landmine. However there is danger in talking about your problems to other people. Gossiping about the bad someone has done can cause more pain and trouble (Proverbs 26:20-27). Instead you should tell God about all the pain and anger you feel. In the Bible David often did this. You can read about it in the Psalms. You should tell God because He has the power to do something to make it better.
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2. **Think about God's forgiveness for you.** The Bible says, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8. It was our sins that were on Jesus. We killed God's Son. That is a very big sin. Now compare this big sin to the sin of the person who hurt you. If God is willing to forgive you for your big sin, shouldn't you forgive what others have done to you?

Picture Jesus on the cross. In the middle of terrible pain and heartache, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). He is saying those words to you now. Receive His love deep in your heart and know that no matter what someone else has done to you, you are safe in Jesus' love.

3. **Ask God to give you a new heart.** Confess your bitterness and unforgiveness and any other sins to God (1 John 1:9). Ask Him for a heart of love and forgiveness towards the person who hurt you. He is wanting to share His forgiveness through you to that person. Jesus died to make this possible. Believe it and it will be true. You can have the greatest Forgiver living in your heart.
4. **Say aloud the words of forgiveness.** "I choose to forgive _____ (name of the person) for doing _____ (what he did). He was wrong, but I surrender it to God to punish him or change his heart."
5. **Be kind to the person who wronged you.** Pray for him to change. If he knew you were angry, ask him for forgiveness. Through your kindness he will see God's love (Romans 12:17-21). You may be the channel through which God can reach him and many others.

Follow these steps for anyone towards whom you feel bitter and unforgiving. You may want remember back to the beginning of your life and think through the years of the people who have hurt you. Especially think about family members. Let forgiveness become a quick and ready mindset at every future offense.



Plant Another Seed

As you forgive others, some of them will respond and you will be reconciled to them. Share with them how God has helped you through this lesson. Lead them to forgive those who have hurt them. Some people will not respond. They may even become more angry with you. Trust God to work in their hearts over time. Your example of forgiveness will cause other people to want to learn about God's forgiveness and how to have harmony. You can then share this lesson with them.

Chapter 21

How to Lead a Worship Service

Learn better how to worship God and lead others to experience the presence of God when they worship together.

Imagine that you are the master of ceremonies at a special occasion to honor the king. The king is sitting on his royal throne in front of you. Answer the following questions:

- A. What actions would you use to honor the king?
- B. What words would you choose to welcome the king?
- C. How would you bring as a gift to the king?
- D. How would you present a message honoring the greatness of the king?

Even if other people watching from another room could not see the king, but could only see you, they would know his presence by your actions and your words.

Read Psalm 29:10, 11. In every worship service we participate in, what king is present there on his throne?

It is wonderful that the King of kings does not force us to worship Him. Instead He kindly shows us His compassion and power. Then we worship Him because we love and respect Him and want to honor Him.

Why Do We Worship?

God made us to live with Him. He is coming again so that we can be continually in His presence (Revelation 21:3). But He wants us to experience wonderful worship in His presence now. Our purpose is to honor and exalt God, to love Him for all He has done. As we do this we will be greatly blessed. We enter into

true worship when we surrender mind, body and soul to an infinitely powerful God.

1. When we worship, God is exalted. Read Psalm 100 and write some reasons that we should exalt God.

2. When we worship, God blesses the worshipper. Read Revelation 21:4. What does God do for us when we come into His presence?

God never takes away something unless He gives us something better. Read Isaiah 35:10. What does God want to give us as we worship Him?

As we worship in His holy presence, God will minister to the individual and the congregation, taking away the pain sin has brought and replacing it with inner peace, joy, and holiness.

3. When we worship, God strengthens His church. Read 1 Corinthians 14:26. What does God use to strengthen His church?

God's presence is invisible but tangible. Unless a person experiences God's tangible presence during worship, they will be disappointed with their worship experience and ultimately may stop coming to the worship program.

4. When we worship, God blesses the stranger. Read 1 Corinthians 14:24, 25. When there is true worship what happens to the stranger who sees it?

The Worship Service

The Bible does not give us a format for the worship service. In the Bible we are told what others have done when coming into the presence of God to worship Him.

Read each of the following verses and write down the things people have done when they have worshipped God together.

Psalm 95:1-7

Psalm 116:17

Psalm 119:15, 16

1 Peter 1:25

Acts 4:31

How to Plan a Worship Service

Read Matthew 18:20. What happens when Christians meet together?

You can't see God but He is truly there. Imagine the all-powerful God seated on His throne in all His glory. You are standing before God leading the congregation in worship. Now in light of this thought, how can you best honor and worship God? This is the most important question to ask when preparing a worship service.

Plan everything you do in the worship service to help the people see that God is present with the congregation and to experience God as the center of the worship service. This includes:

- Every word that is spoken
- Every song that is sang
- Every Bible verse that is read
- Every action the leaders make

Additional Suggestions

Here are some additional suggestions to improve the worship service. Remember Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 14:33. "God is not a God of disorder but of peace."

- As a leader and as a worship team, pray for God's guidance as you plan the worship program. Plan and prepare the whole program before the Sabbath.
 - On Sabbath the worship team should arrive early and pray together, seeking the presence of God and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
 - Remember you will be in the holy presence of God, so dress appropriately.
 - God is to be the center of your worship, not the congregation. Encourage people to welcome each other before the worship time begins, not when worship begins. God is your Royal guest, give Him a royal welcome.
 - The worship team should be sitting where they can easily lead their part of the worship program and should know when they should rise and speak.
 - Speak clearly so that everyone can hear you (1 Corinthians. 14:9). If you are using microphones, make sure they are working before the worship time begins and be sure each person leading out knows how to use them.
 - Speak to the education level of the worshippers (1 Corinthians. 14:11).
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- Remember that the Bible is the word of God. Treat it with respect when you handle it. Encourage those who read the Bible to speak out clearly so that everyone can hear. Give the people time to find the verses before they are read. Read slowly, with feeling. God is speaking His word through you.
- If a testimony is to be given, be sure the person giving the testimony has prepared, and that the testimony will bring honor to God.
- The song leader should have a sweet voice, know the songs and sing in tune.
- If a special song is to be sung, it should be well-rehearsed ahead of time and should bring glory to God not the singer. Encourage the people to show their appreciation of the song in a way that doesn't praise the person who sang. For example, they could say "Praise the Lord" at the end of the song.
- If musical instruments are to be used in the worship of God, make sure that the people who will be playing know how to play the songs correctly and in the correct key. If recorded music is to be used, do not have the volume too loud. Remember God is right there with you, He is not listening from Heaven.
- There is no need to introduce every part and each person who presents. Instead, let each new presenter use phrases that refer to how you will be worshipping God like:
 - “Join me as we bow and worship God in prayer”
 - “Let us praise God in song”
 - “Now God will speak to us through His word”

King Jesus is coming. We will soon join the angels in seeing Him face to face. What a great day of joy that will be. Even now there is so much to be thankful for. Philippians 3:3 tells us that the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to worship God. We can speak words of gratitude and to live in His presence with joy. Let us worship Him with all our hearts!



Plant Another Seed

Invite new Christians to spend time worshipping God with you in small groups of two or three. As they experience God's presence more and more they will be able to help lead others to worship God. Then they can effectively help plan and lead the worship service in a larger setting.

Chapter 22

How to Keep the Sabbath Holy

Keep the Sabbath holy by living in God's presence and honoring Him as Creator.

The Sabbath is a joy. God gave us the Sabbath because He loves us. Every Saturday God wants us to:

- Have a day of rest from our hard work.
- Enjoy our families and church members.
- Spend time worshipping Him and learning more about Him.
- Enjoy helping others.

Praise God that He has given us such a special day!

Read Isaiah 58:13-14. What does God promise if we keep the Sabbath?

You have studied about the Sabbath elsewhere and know it is a gift from God for all people at Creation. You also know it is one of God's most important Ten Commandments. In this lesson we will focus on how to keep the Sabbath holy in order to honor God and gain much personal benefit.

Enjoy God's Creation on Sabbath

Read Genesis 2:1-3. What great event do we celebrate on Sabbath?

We are worshipping the true and only Creator God. We are blessed to know the One who gave us life and created all things good for us to enjoy. On Sabbath we

can take time in nature to learn lessons about God and how He wants us to live. He has placed many lessons in the natural beauty around us.

Here are some things you can do on Sabbath to enjoy God through nature:

- Take a walk in nature and look for things that Jesus mentioned in His parables. Talk about the lessons He was teaching.
- Gather things from nature for each day of creation. Read Genesis 1 to remind you and collect items that match. Sit together and talk about what God has made.
- Take a kitten, puppy or other small animal and visit a hospital, an orphanage or an elderly person at his home. Let the animal cheer the people. Talk about the Creator and let them feel God's goodness and love.
- God made you in His image, so celebrate by doing something creative. Write a poem or a song or draw a picture that says something about the God of nature.
- Make cards by writing scriptures on paper. Use items in nature such as flowers, sticks and pretty rocks to decorate the card using tape or glue. Give them away to your neighbors.

Enjoy Helping Others on Sabbath

Read Mark 3:1-5. What did Jesus say we should do on the Sabbath?

Jesus especially cares for those who are lonely, sick or sad. He also knows we are often too busy during the week to help them. He has given us the Sabbath as a special day to care for them. You will feel God's special presence as you go out to help.

Here are some things you could do to help others on Sabbath:

- Visit hospitals and share flowers, toys, food and literature. Sing to them and read from the Bible. Pray for them and ask God to bring them peace, joy and healing.
 - Take packages of used clothes and food to poor people. If possible, give the things secretly. You might put a note inside that says, "The God who created you, loves you."
 - Visit a prison and share God's love and life-changing power with the inmates.
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- Write a letter to someone who is lonely or sad.
- Visit someone who has stopped coming to church.

Enjoy Fellowship and Worship on Sabbath

Read Acts 13:42-44. What did Paul and the other disciples do on the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is the special day God has called us to worship Him. Since He is our Creator, He is also our Father. That makes us all brothers and sisters. God invites us to meet together each Sabbath for fellowship and worship.

Here are some things you could do:

- Prepare your heart in the morning before you go to church. Confess your sins and ask Him to fill you with His holiness so that you can keep the Sabbath and bless others at church and throughout the day.
- Worship God at church with genuine joy. Picture your great King as right there with all of you.
- Meet in the afternoon to study the Bible with a small group of people. This can both strengthen the church members and teach new people.
- Gather the children and act out Bible stories. Ask those watching, "What does this story teach about God?" End with praise in songs and prayer.

Enjoy Rest on Sabbath

Read Exodus 20:8-11. What does God say we should not do on the Sabbath?

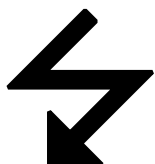
God has set aside twenty-four hours as holy time. This is His gift to help us have physical health, time to worship God, spend with our families, and help those in need. To do this, we must determine to stop our other activities. If you are still working on the Sabbath, plead earnestly with God for the faith to stop working and to trust Him that He will provide for your family's needs. Since He made the world, He can take care of you.

In the Bible Friday is called the day of preparation (Luke 23:54). We can use this day to get us ready to enjoy Sabbath.

Here are some simple ideas that will help you be able to stop all your work on Sabbath so that you will be free to enjoy all the other good things He wants you to do.

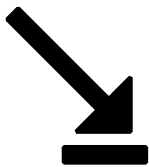
- Clean your house and the church on Friday. Shut off the TV and replace the newspapers and magazines with your Bible and song book.
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- Prepare and iron clothes for church on Friday so you can have time to spend with God on Sabbath morning instead of hurrying to get ready to go.
- Buy on Friday the food you will need for Sabbath.
- At sundown on Friday evening call your family and friends for worship. Give all your worries and problems into God's hands.



Apply this to Your Life

Now that you have thought of many ideas for keeping the Sabbath holy, go back over the list and choose the ones you will do this week. Circle them and determine to do them through God's strength. Remember Jesus' wonderful promise, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" Matthew 11:28-29.



Plant Another Seed

Meet with other church members to discuss these ideas. Make plans together for Sabbath activities that will bless the church members and the community. You may also want to invite friends and neighbors to join you for certain Sabbath activities that will help them learn about God through the joy and purpose you live on that day.

Chapter 23

Preparation for Baptism

Partner with the Holy Spirit to adequately prepare people for baptism.

In the book of Acts there is a story of a Jailer who is Baptized
Read Acts 16:25-34.

- What do you think this jailer's life was like before he believed in Jesus?
- How did Paul answer the jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?"
- You have also seen people baptized. What is the meaning of baptism?

The jailer almost killed himself when he thought the prisoners had escaped. His life was without hope. Through the witness of Paul and Silas, he learned about Jesus' death on the cross for his sins. The jailer believed and was baptized. He was so happy and thankful for salvation.

In this lesson we will look carefully at the meaning of baptism and how to help someone prepare to be baptized. This will remind us of our own special experience with God. It is our privilege after we have witnessed to others, to lead them to receive salvation and prepare for baptism.

Read Titus 2:14 and 3:4-7. The water of baptism has no magical power to wash away our sins. What cleanses our hearts?

Jesus died for our sins. It is only through Jesus' blood that we can be cleansed of sin. The Holy Spirit is the One who comes into our hearts and cleans us.

The above texts show the first evidence that someone is ready for baptism.

1. He believes in Jesus for the cleansing of his sins.

You can help him prepare by clearly showing him the truths of the gospel, leading him to believe.

A Huge Crowd is Baptized

Read Acts 2:36-39. How did Peter answer the crowd when they asked what they should do since they had crucified Jesus?

Peter specifically told the people they should repent and be baptized. There is no benefit in baptism or in joining a church if a person does not turn from his sins. When the person walks into the water, he is making a choice to leave his sins behind and follow Jesus instead.

Some people do not want to leave their sins. They think they will have less pleasure if they follow Jesus. Read Acts 2:40-41. How did the people respond to Peter's invitation to repent and be baptized?

There is great joy and peace when we repent and turn to Jesus. This story shows us the second evidence that someone is ready for baptism.

2. He chooses to repent, leaving his sins behind to follow Jesus.

You can help him prepare by showing him the hurtfulness of sin and the joy of following Jesus. You can teach him the Ten Commandments which show sin and righteousness. You can help him know Jesus so he will want to follow Him.

Selfishness Dies in Baptism

Read Romans 6:1-13. This is a very special passage about baptism. Study it carefully to understand.

Read Romans 6:4. The text compares baptism to Jesus' death and resurrection. What does this mean?

Jesus died and rose to new life. In baptism we die to our past life of sin and rise to a new life with Jesus in our hearts.

Read Romans 6:6. What is it that dies in baptism?

Without Jesus we are very selfish. We think first about our own survival and happiness. All sin is committed because of this selfishness. People cheat and steal because they want their own happiness even if it hurts others. People commit adultery because they love their own pleasure more than their family. People criticize and lie because they care more about their own position than other people's feelings.

Through Jesus' death on the cross, God wants to change our hearts from selfishness to God-like love. He wants us to live to help others and trust Him to take care of our needs. We receive this great salvation from sin by our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. We show our choice by being baptized.

Read Romans 6:10-13 again. What must the new Christian do every day to continue in the experience of baptism?

When we are baptized we choose to let selfishness die and allow Jesus to live in our hearts. We need to do this every day.

The above texts show the third evidence that someone is ready for baptism.

3. He chooses to let selfishness die and receives Jesus into his heart.

You can help him prepare by praying with him regarding his temptations. You can show him the way to victory through belief in God's promises.

The Persecutor Saul Receives Baptism

Saul hated Christians. He was a very religious man but did not believe the story of Jesus was true. He arrested Christians, hoping they would be killed. God wanted to save him and use him to reach many other lost people. Jesus appeared to Saul in a vision to show him his sin and to offer him salvation.

Read Acts 9:17-20. After Saul was baptized what two things did he do?

Saul did the same two things that every new Christian should do. He joined with other Christians in fellowship and worship. He immediately began to share with others the good news of what God had done for him. The Holy Spirit came upon him just as it did on Jesus after His baptism. God used Saul mightily to lead thousands to Christ.

The above texts show the fourth evidence that someone is ready for baptism.

4. He chooses to join the fellowship of the church and begins to do ministry through the
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power of the Holy Spirit.

You can help him prepare by inviting him to worship services and Bible studies with you. You can have him join you in reaching out to others.

Your Friend Receives Baptism

The Bible says there is great rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. The day your friend is baptized will be a day of wonderful happiness for him and for you.

We have seen four evidences that show a person is ready for baptism. You need to talk to your friend and look at his life to see if he is ready. In summary,

1. Does he believe that Jesus died for his sins and that he can be saved only through God's grace and not through his own works?
2. Does he understand what sin and righteousness are as declared in the Ten Commandments and in the life of Jesus? Has he chosen to turn away from sin?
3. Has he received Jesus into his heart and begun to follow Christ's example and teaching?
4. Is he regularly joining the fellowship of Seventh-day Adventist Christians and is he determined to serve God, preparing himself and others for Christ's return?

If these things are true, then contact a pastor and counsel with him regarding your friend. Encourage the pastor or elder to also talk with him to make sure he is ready. It is best for your friend to be very clear about this most important decision in life. That way it will have the greatest benefit for his life.



Plant Another Seed

Talk to the new Christians who have been baptized and encourage them to begin immediately sharing the gospel with others. Remind them of Saul's story and how God wants to use them to lead others to Christ and help prepare them for baptism.

As we each choose to die to our selfishness and let Jesus live in our hearts, thousands more will be baptized and prepare for Jesus' soon return.

Below is a sample responsive reading that can be done at baptism to remind the candidates what they are doing and to declare the meaning of baptism clearly for those who are watching. If the baptism is done with joy and reverence, others will be convicted that they too should give their lives to God and receive His wonderful salvation.

Questions for Baptismal Candidates

Leader: You are about to be baptized. What does baptism mean to you?

Candidate: My baptism is a symbol that I am receiving salvation from my sins through the grace of God.

Leader: Who is this God that you are choosing to follow?

Candidate: I believe He is the eternal God, who is completely powerful, knows everything, created all things and is Lord of all. I follow God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit who are one, full of love, mercy and able to save us.

Leader: What did this God save you from?

Candidate: I believe that the world leads us to suffering and death. The Lord saved me from the power of sin, giving me victory and transformation. He saved me from death through forgiving all my sins. One day He will resurrect me and give me eternal life. He also saved me from the power of evil spirits.

Leader: How did God save you?

Candidate: I believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal God was born as a man to save us from our sins. He was killed on a cross for my sins and rose again. It is not because of my good works but through faith in Him that I receive forgiveness and a new heart. I am so happy to choose to become His child.

Leader: What does it mean to be a child of God?

Candidate: Being a child of God means that I respect and obey God first before anyone else. I will not worship idols or spirits or anything connected to them. I have peace in God. Because I love God, I want to be close to Him. Therefore I will spend time with God through prayer, Bible study and worship. I will believe and trust God, the Creator who gives me life. I will do this by worshipping Him on the seventh-day, which is His holy day. I choose not to work on that day, but to keep it holy in His presence. Because everything I have belongs to God, I am happy to give back to God through my tithes and offerings. My body is the Holy Spirit's temple and therefore I will care for it, not using drugs, alcohol, tobacco or unclean meats that destroy health.

Leader: What does it mean to have new life in Christ?

Candidate: The new life is a life of love for all people through the power of the Lord. Through the mercy and strength of God I will respect and obey my

M U L T I P L I C A T I O N

parents, help my neighbors and forgive my enemies. I will eagerly share the good news of salvation to all people that I meet. By His power I will turn from everything wicked such as murder, cruelty, immorality, lying and greed.

Leader: Who receives these people of faith to be their brothers and sisters?

Congregation: All of us do. We are God's children in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We receive them to be our brothers and sisters through God's grace. We are one body and we must take care of each other, building up our faith and sharing the good news until Jesus returns.

Chapter 24

Multiplying Disciples for the Harvest

Disciple new Christians through nurture and training.

God had a vision for the entire world. “God so loved THE WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son...” John 3:16. Jesus had a vision for the entire world. “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole WORLD” 1 John 2:2. The Holy Spirit has a vision for the entire world. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the EARTH” Acts 1:8. The important question now is, “Do you have a vision for the entire world?” Can you say, “I want to see people reached beyond my village, my city and my country, even into all the WORLD?”

Jesus wants to come back very soon. You have learned the mysteries of the Holy Spirit in these lessons. Let His work not stop with you! You must find a way to share what you have learned so that there will be millions of workers sharing these mysteries. Look carefully at Jesus’ method to see what you are to do so that God’s work will multiply rapidly and the end will come.

Jesus’ Method for Multiplying Disciples

Read Mark 3:13-15. What four things does it say Jesus called the disciples to do?

Jesus wanted the disciples to be with Him. They developed a strong relationship with Him by listening to His teaching and following His example. He also trained them to go out and preach, heal and set people free from evil spirits. This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We live the two great commandments, which are to love God and to love other people.

Read John 1:35-46. What did Andrew and Philip do after Jesus called them to follow Him?

You are also Jesus' disciples. He wants you to partner with the Holy Spirit to help others become Jesus' disciples. You should do this for the people among whom you have been witnessing. You can also do this for church members who have not yet become strong in Jesus. Right now, think about whom among your family and friends you can invite to join you in closely following Jesus? Write their names here. It is wise for men to disciple men and women to disciple women if at all possible.

Read Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus commanded us to make disciples. What did He tell us to do as we make disciples?

- He said, "Go!" We are to leave the comfort of our homes and visit those who do not know God. We are to help them with their problems in anyway we can.
- He said, "Baptize!" Baptism is a symbol for the wonderful salvation Jesus gives to wash our sins and makes us new people. We are to lead people to receive Jesus as their Savior.
- He said, "Teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you." We are to nurture and train new Christians to follow all of Jesus' teachings.

Our job is clear. We are to call others to join us as we follow Jesus.

Rapid Multiplication

A healthy banana tree will not only produce sweet fruit but also new shoots to start new banana trees. In some languages this is called the mother and the babies. The babies grow up alongside the mother plant. The babies can later be transplanted to other areas. The babies will grow up to become mothers that also produce bananas and new baby shoots. This is how a country becomes full of banana plants.

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2. This text describes something that is like the multiplication of the banana tree. What is the Christians supposed to do?

A truly healthy Christian will bear the fruits of the Spirit which are the characteristics of Jesus. He will also lead others to Christ and thus raise up new

Christians. He will stay close to them to help them become strong and faithful in God. He will train this new Christian to lead others to Christ and follow the same process for them. This is how a country can become full of true disciples of Christ.

If one Christian led 5 people to accept God’s salvation in one year, then after 20 years there would be 100 new Christians. That is good addition. But God’s better way is multiplication. It is the banana way. After one Christian leads someone to accept God’s salvation, he should help him become strong in Christ and then train him to lead his friends and family to Christ.

If one Christian lead 5 new people to God in one year and taught them to do the same, after only 10 years there would be over 100 million new Christians. This will happen only if each Christian nurtures and trains others and teaches the new disciples to do the same. If we do this through the Holy Spirit’s power, how quickly Jesus will come!

This kind of exciting growth will happen only as you dedicate yourself to seeing it happen. You must continue to witness to new interests even as you train up the new converts to reach out to others. You cannot become an administrator or teacher that just tells others what to do. Otherwise you will no longer be a good example to the new converts of what they should become.

Through these lessons you have carefully studied the ten areas in which the Holy Spirit partners with us as His witnesses. You have asked God to help you improve in each area and become a better disciple of His. Now you need to go back through these ten areas as you consider how to help others become Jesus’ disciples. In any area that the new Christian is weak, you can help him by going through the materials in this book and by praying with him often.

Reflect on Those You Want to Disciple

Look at your list of names above. Think about each one by asking the questions below. Take a piece of paper and make a list of the areas in which he is strong so you can encourage him. Make a list of areas he is weak so you can help him.

Here is an example:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Areas He is Strong</u>	<u>Areas He is Weak and Needs to Grow</u>
Phirun	Reads his Bible often Helps the poor and sick Prays for others	To be more kind as a father To speak in an interesting way and with power To worship God faithfully, with joy on Sabbath

Then help him grow through your teaching and your example. If you are going to learn how to dig a well or how to use a computer, don't you learn best by watching someone? A really good teacher will let you try to do it yourself and give you advice as you have questions. This is the best way to train new Christians.

1. Let them watch you.
2. Let them try to do it.
3. Give them further advice.

Go through these ten questions now and make the list of strengths and weaknesses for those you want to nurture and train. Continue to pray for yourself that you will receive the Holy Spirit's presence and power in all ten areas more and more each day.

1. Conviction. "Presence of the Spirit"

The life of a baby starts before anyone else knows it. Conception begins quietly and only later shows. So it is with God's work on the heart. The Holy Spirit has been working for years with the person you are helping. He is the only One who is capable of finishing the job well. God is convicting his heart of sin, righteousness and judgment.

- A) What good changes have been happening in him that you can affirm and encourage?
- B) What sin is God convicting him of that you can encourage him to let go.

2. Conversion. "Born of the Spirit"

Every person starts life as a baby. Birth is the beginning. Every person also needs a spiritual rebirth. If the person you are helping hasn't truly received God's salvation, nothing else in this list will matter. Help him receive God as his Savior and prepare for baptism.

- A) Is he confident that God loves him?
- B) Has he received forgiveness and become a new person in Christ?

3. Bible Study. "Sword of the Spirit"

When a baby is small you must spoon feed it. Then you must teach him to eat for himself. In the same way you have helped the new Christian grow by teaching him. Now you must help him have his own relationship with God so that he will be strong when you are not there to help him. Open the Bible together and show Him how you read the Bible for strength.

- A) Is he spending meaningful time with God every day in Bible study?
- B) Is he leading his family closer to God through family worship?

4. Christian Character. "Fruit of the Spirit"

Every child needs help learning to walk. You wouldn't shout at him when he falls. You would help him. The new Christian needs you to do the same. Since he is your friend, you can help him read and pray about areas that need to be more like Christ. When he fails, encourage him and show him how to win by faith in God's promises.

- A) In what ways does he need to become more like Jesus in character?
- B) What sins and temptations can you help him overcome through Christ?

5. Prayer. "Breath of the Spirit"

Children love to talk to their parents. They tell them about their day at school. They talk about their problems. They ask for many things. A new Christian needs to talk often with God. You can help him learn to pray to God about all his problems and joys. You can help him learn to pray for others' needs as well. The best way to train him is by praying together.

- A) Does he bring his problems and joys to God in prayer often, surrendering his life to God?
- B) Is he spending significant time praying for others?

6. Good Works. "Gifts of the Spirit"

Each child has special talents and each must help in the home. Children have to be shown how to clean and cook. After watching they must try it. They will make mistakes and need to be shown again. The new Christian should also be involved in helping God's work. Each will have different talents. You should take him with you as you help others and let him watch you. Then give him small things with which to help. He will become confident and able to help others. Help him discover his spiritual gifts.

- A) Is he helping people with their problems as Jesus did?
- B) How can you help him learn to serve people more effectively? (Such as helping people in areas of finances, health, literacy, youth ministry, evil spirit problems, etc.)

7. Spoken Witness. "Tongues of the Spirit"

It is a joy to hear a child's first words. You do not criticize him for speaking incorrectly. As he get older he will learn how to communicate more correctly through learning reading, spelling and grammar. The more he knows, the more effective he will be. It is your privilege to help the new Christian learn how to share his testimony and gradually become more effective in speaking for God.

- A) Is he praying for the Spirit's power and His wisdom for what to say?
- B) Is he telling others what God has done for him?

8. Community of Believers. "Body of the Spirit"

Every child needs a family. Each family member must help the other. If there is an argument in the family, they must all work it out so there will be harmony

again. You need to help the new Christian to see the church as his extended family, learning to work together. If he becomes hurt by someone in the church, work with him to solve the problem.

- A) Is he helping other church members with their problems and treating them with Christian love?
- B) Does he meet regularly with other members to encourage and pray for each other?

9. Worship. "Temple of the Spirit"

A child should not just ask his parents for things, he must learn to be grateful. He must show deep respect to his parents. You can help the new Christian to show gratitude and thanks to his heavenly Father through meaningful worship especially on the Sabbath.

- A) Does he truly sense God's presence when you come together for worship?
- C) Is he keeping the Sabbath by spending the day in God's presence?

10. Multiplication. "Rain of the Spirit"

Children grow up, marry and have children of their own. New Christians also mature and then lead new interests to receive God's salvation. They in turn raise those new Christians through this same process. You should encourage him to make a list of people to disciple and to go through this list just as you have now done. Instruct him how to help them grow just as you have helped him. Urge him to teach them to do the same for their friends who are not Christians.

- A) Is he praying daily for the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
- B) Is he training new Christians to be strong in God and effective in ministry?
- C) Is he part of starting a new church?



Plant Another Seed

Rain helps crops grow throughout the season. Rain is essential at the beginning when the seed is planted, through the growth and for the final maturing. God has promised the Holy Spirit to help you like the rain (Joel 2:23, 28-32). The Holy Spirit helps you become a Christian, helps you grow more like Christ and brings you to full maturity. You are thus able to lead many others to Christ as well. Let us commit our hearts fully to being ready for Jesus come. Let us devote our lives completely to helping others be ready too.

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How to Teach Growing in the Spirit

Some thoughts about how to share “Growing in the Spirit”

Jesus is coming back to earth soon. He will be looking for you, eager to take you to heaven to live with Him forever. He will be looking for each person who has received His salvation and been faithful to Him. Others will flee from His face, trying to hide in caves and behind rocks because of their sin and unbelief. Some of those will be Christians who started strong, but later turned away from God.

You are eagerly waiting for that day. But here is an important question: Who will join you as you go to heaven? How many of your family, friends and neighbors will be there because you have led them to know God and helped them grow and remain faithful to Him?

The Bible gives a wonderful promise of what God can do through the Christian who serves Him. “A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time” Isaiah 60:22.

This means that through you thousands of people can come to know God and be ready for Jesus when He returns. Wouldn't that be exciting? How happy you would be to see God's delight and your friends' happiness.

How is it possible for God to use you to reach so many? Jesus has a specific method and a special power to make it happen. You have learned about this in the book “Growing in the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is the mighty power to keep you faithful and help you witness. Jesus' way of training the disciples is His special method that you will use.

Now that you have experienced these things, you are ready to help newly baptized members experience the same. You can become an older brother or sister, aunt

or uncle to them. As you befriend and teach them, you will help prevent them from being pulled back into the world by friends, family, temptations and evil spirits.

The new members are eager to grow. They are looking for someone to help them. Jesus said that those who are converted and receive salvation are like little children (Matthew 18:3; 19:14). This means they are full of faith, and teachable. It also means they are in need of tender care and direction from those who have known God longer and are more mature in their walk with God.

God expects every church member to do this work of nurturing new believers. If we want to have millions hear the gospel and have Jesus return to earth quickly, we must all join in the work. In a family, everyone must help with some kind of work whether it's fixing food, cleaning dishes or washing the motorcycle. So in God's family we all must do our part.

The steps to reaching the world and seeing Jesus return are simple:

1. Lead a new Christian to be Jesus' disciple and receive the Holy Spirit.
2. Train the new Christian to do the same for the next new member.

You can use the book "Growing in the Spirit" to do this:

1. Lead the new Christian through each lesson until he both understands and practices the truths in it.
2. Train the new Christian to go through each lesson with the next new member.

The steps are simple, but doing it effectively takes practice and earnest dependence on God. Here are some principles to help you follow Jesus' methods so you will see your neighbors and even thousands become strong disciples of Jesus.

1. Help New Members One-to-One

Don't start with the thousands, start with one. Although Jesus preached to thousands and healed many, He worked closely with only 12 and often taught people one-to-one. Why did He do that?

Preaching to a large group can sometimes be like trying to fill 100 cups by throwing water in the air. Teaching one-to-one is more like pouring water from a pitcher into someone's cup who can then pour it into another person's cup and come right back for a refill.

Jesus wanted people to feel God's love in a real, personal way. God loves each person very much and Jesus would have died for just one sinner. When we take time to help just one person, he feels God's love much more than by hearing a sermon about it.

Many times people will not express their questions or problems in a group. They are more likely to speak honestly with one person that they truly trust. If you help people one-to-one they will receive more help because they trust you.

When you teach someone one-to-one you can more easily focus your teaching on that person's life situation. You can show him how to apply God's word to his family, his work and his temptations.

- You are about to make a special relationship with a new member. How did Paul describe the relationships he had with new members? 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11.
- What counsel did Paul give on who we should nurture? Titus 2:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:2

It is best for men to do these lessons with men and women with women. It is usually most effective when you help someone who is your age or younger. At the same time, you must not be afraid to help those who are older than you or better educated. We must remember they are still like children in their understanding of God's word. They have had only a little experience in obeying and serving God. With humility and respectfulness you can teach them too.

Pray that God will guide you to the new member that you can best help. If you have a church leader, ask him to help you know which person you can lead. Start with one, focus on one, and soon that one will be able to share God's love with another one.

2. Pray Often with Faith and Earnestness

Jesus' disciples came from many backgrounds and had many problems. James and John were quick-tempered, Thomas was full of doubts, Peter spoke without thinking and Judas was dishonest and greedy.

Jesus did not become discouraged with His disciples problems. He didn't spend all His time trying to correct their problems. Instead He took them to God in prayer. Sometimes He prayed all night for them. You also must devote yourself to praying often for the new member you have chosen to help. Truly, only God can change his life and prayer is how you link to His power.

- What did Jesus pray about for Peter? Luke 22:31-32.

- What types of things did Paul pray for new believers? Colossians 1:9-11.

Praying is the most important thing you can do to help a new member. Set aside time by yourself to pray for him every day. Find out more about his needs, struggles and hopes. When you meet with him at church or in a home, take time to pray for each other.

You may want to often pray for God to work in his life specifically in the “10 Areas of the Holy Spirit” that the lessons are based on.

1. Conviction. “Presence of the Spirit”
2. Conversion. “Born of the Spirit”
3. Bible Study. “Sword of the Spirit”
4. Christian Character. “Fruit of the Spirit”
5. Prayer. “Breath of the Spirit”
6. Good Works. “Gifts of the Spirit”
7. Spoken Witness. “Tongues of the Spirit”
8. Community of Believers. “Body of the Spirit”
9. Worship. “Temple of the Spirit”
10. Multiplication. “Rain of the Spirit”

3. Teach by being a Godly Example

Jesus said to the disciples, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” Matthew 4:19. The disciples followed Jesus everywhere watching how He treated the sick, the poor and the foreigners. They watched how He corrected Peter and was patient with Judas. They saw how He prayed and studied the scriptures. They learned more by what they saw in Jesus than by what they heard Him teach.

It is the same for children. A father may say, “Don’t drink alcohol,” but if he drinks, his children are likely to follow his example rather than his words. This is also true of the newly baptized member. He will look at Christians and especially at you to see how to live.

- What did Paul tell new believers to do? 1 Corinthians 11:1.
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- If you set a good example and the new member follows your good example, how far can the influence spread? 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8.

Before you teach each lesson from “Growing in the Spirit” take time to read it prayerfully. Ask God to show you where you need to be a better example of what is in the lesson. God will give you power to obey His word and to live a godly example.

4. Teach by Using God’s Word

Jesus was a very good teacher. He spoke many wise and interesting sayings. However, if you look closely in the Bible you will see that He often quoted the Old Testament scriptures to answer questions that people had. He also used God’s word when He fought against Satan’s temptations. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” Matthew 4:4.

It is very important that you teach the new member by using God’s word frequently. Do not let them rely on your counsel or even on your example. Point them to God’s word as the highest source of truth and the only secure example.

- What is the Bible able to do for you and the people you help? 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
- What is the purpose of your teaching and how does it become powerful? Colossians 1:28-29.
- What else can we use to help people remember God’s words? Colossians 3:16.

When you study with the new member, be sure you bring your Bible and he brings his. Open to each text and read it carefully, even two or three times. Ask him the questions and let him look again in the text until he finds the answer for himself. This will help him look to God’s word for answers rather than to his ideas or yours. You should also encourage him to memorize scriptures that will especially help him.

5. Teach for Obedience

Judas walked with Jesus for more than three years and then betrayed Him and hung himself. Today the name Judas is associated with failure and shame. Peter also failed, but then experienced true conversion and became obedient, suffering persecution, dying for God. The name Peter is associated with victory, leadership and the conversion of thousands. Judas learned truth but Peter learned to live truth.

You also want to help the new member be obedient, faithful and victorious. You must teach him to put into practice the things that he learns.

- What did Jesus ask you to teach? Matthew 28:19.

- What should you do if the new member falls into temptation, makes a mistake or sins? Galatians 6:1-2.

At the end of every lesson in “Growing in the Spirit” there is something to do. Many times it says, “Apply this to Your Life.” Ask the new member to do the things suggested. Tell him you will ask him about it next time you meet. When you meet again, find out if he did what you asked him to do. Give him counsel and encouragement on what he has done. If he has not done anything, do not go on to the next lesson. Go back over the lesson he has not yet practiced. Help him where he has questions. Pray for him to be able to follow and obey.

For example, maybe he is struggling to forgive an enemy. Go over the lesson on forgiving others with him again. Go through the steps of forgiveness. Show, teach and pray until he acts.

You will help him best by doing the things with him. For example, if he doesn’t understand how to keep the Sabbath, invite him to join your family for Sabbath, spending time with God and helping other people. Let him see what you do and don’t do on Sabbath.

In the book “Growing in the Spirit,” Lesson 24, “Multiplying Disciples for the Harvest” there are good questions for each of the ten areas to help you see if the new member is truly growing in the Holy Spirit as a disciple of Jesus.

Do not be content because the new member understands truth. Jesus said, “Everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall” Matthew 7:26-27.

6. Empower the New Member to Help Others

Jesus sent the twelve disciples out to help others. He said, “And as you go, preach, saying ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” Matthew 10:7-8.

A free-flowing stream is clear and clean. If a clear stream is dammed up, it soon becomes muddy. So also, if the new member only receives and doesn’t give to others, he will lose what he has received.

The new member must also share with others what he has gained. This will make him a stronger, happier person. On the other hand, if he keeps the good news to himself, he will lose his joy and conviction.

- What did Jesus promise would happen to those who give to others? Luke 6:38.

- What did Paul say was important to teach members to do? Titus 3:14.

You can empower the new member to help others by urging him to do what it says in each lesson under the section entitled “Plant Another Seed.” Through this he will learn to help others by what he says and by his actions. He will help people with their physical and spiritual problems.

Watch for areas that are difficult for him. Maybe he has a hard time sharing his testimony with others. You can help him gain confidence and ability by the following method:

Have him listen to you as you share your testimony. Let him practice saying his testimony to you. Go and visit his family and friends together. Let him see you share your testimony around others. Then encourage him to do the same.

Every time you train the new member to serve and share, follow this basic pattern:

1. Let him watch you do it.
 2. Let him try to do it.
 3. Give him further advice on how to improve.
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Paul describes a fourth step which will make a new believer even stronger. In 2 Timothy 2:2 he says, “Commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Your work with the new member is not finished until you help him teachers others to do what you have done for him.

4. Help him teach someone else to do what you have taught him.

The best way to do this will be by helping him find another newly baptized member. Then train him through this manual how to use the “Growing in the Spirit” lessons with that person. In this way there will be more and more big brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles for all the new members that are baptized.

Keep in your mind that the new member will best remember, not what you teach him, but what he teaches to others.

7, Be Devoted with Unconditional Love

When Peter betrayed his Master, Jesus did not give up on him. Jesus found him and spoke faith, forgiveness and hope to him (John 21:15-19). So also, God wants you to be patient with the new member you are helping. He is learning to walk like a new baby. Do not scold him, but encourage him, speaking hope and courage.

- What counsel did Paul give as Timothy tried to help new members? 2 Timothy 4:2, 5.
- Why should you be patient with the new member, committed to helping him no matter what? 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.
- What has God promised that can encourage us to persevere when it is difficult to help the new member? Philippians 1:3-6

When you get discouraged with the new member and don't want to help him anymore, remember that he is God's child. Think how God and others have been patient with you. Ask God to fill you with His love and continue to help him, for his sake and for God's eternal delight.

8. Gather the New Believers into a Group

Jesus did not work with just one person. He gathered the disciples into a group of twelve. Then he sent them out 2-by-2 (6 groups of 2). Let's look at what happened next.

- If each of these 6 groups also gathered 12 people, how many would there be? ($6 \times 12 = \underline{\quad}$) Luke 10:1.

- If the 72 were divided into groups of 2 and they each gathered 12 more people, how many would there be? ($36 \times 2 \underline{\quad} + 72 + 12 = \underline{\quad}$) 1 Corinthians 15:6.

- If 500 were divided into groups of 2 and they each gathered 12 more people, how many would there be? ($250 \times 12 = \underline{\quad}$) Acts 2:41.

God is showing us a pattern He wants us to follow. He wants us to work in pairs and gather people into groups of around 12 people. A group of Christians meeting together can give each other much encouragement. They can be like a family who helps each other through trials to remain faithful to God.

- What does God want us to do for one another? Hebrews 10:24-25.

- Where did church members usually meet together in the days of the apostles? 1 Corinthians 16:19.

Your home is a very good place to teach others about God. Many of your neighbors would not walk into the church or want to stay there, but they will come to your familiar home. Churches are often only open once or twice a week, but your home is always open. Many non-Christians do not understand what happens in a church and they are not interested, but they will see in your home, the gospel lived out in a way that they also need. When they see your love for one another, they will want the same.

As your group grows too large to meet in one house, let it multiply into other homes. Send some of the people with one or two people you have trained and let them start a new group in whatever home will be in the best place for others to come and know Jesus. Visit this group often to encourage the leaders and to

answer questions that arise. Teach the people to look to their group leader for help, not to you.

In this way God's work will multiply quickly, but very strongly in obedience to God's word and love, one-to-one and in a group.

9. Continue to Learn so You have More to Share

Jesus said that anyone who has been trained by Jesus' method is like the manager of a large house who has a treasure chest. He can bring out things "new and old" to share with those in need (Matthew 13:52). You are this manager. God has given you a knowledge of Him. He wants you to continue to learn more and more about His grace and power. The more you learn, the more you will have to share with those you are helping.

- What does God want you to be able to do? 2 Timothy 2:15.

- What attitude should leaders have about themselves? Philippians 3:12-14.

There is so much more to learn from the Bible. Read it often, comparing verse with verse. Memorize it. Meditate on its meaning for your life. The more you do this, the deeper will be your experience with God. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit and it will be like Jesus said, "out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" John 7:38.

It would also be very helpful to learn all you can about health, finances and family relationships. This wisdom you can also share with those you teach. As you help them receive God's blessings, they will be more eager and able to serve God too.

10. Give God the Glory for Your Success

The disciples were very excited about what they had done in casting out evil spirits and healing sicknesses. Jesus was concerned that they would become proud and take glory to themselves.

- Jesus gave them a warning in Luke 10:18. What happened to Satan because of his pride?

 - Jesus told them what they should rejoice about in Luke 10:20. What is it?
-

Our names are written in God's book of life because Jesus died for our sins. We can never earn our way to heaven by what we do. We have power to help people only because God gives it to us. Let our hearts rejoice in what God does and never become proud in what we have done.

- What good counsel does Paul give in 1 Corinthians 3:6-11?

Jesus is coming again! He promised, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" Matthew 24:14.

Soon you will be caught up in to the air with many you have helped. Then you will be part of "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" Revelation 7:9-1

