

A Brief Look
At the
New Life

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A Brief Look at the New Life is a
concise overview of three topics:

Beginning the New Life

Being a Disciple

The Church

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Beginning the New Life

1. Good News

Ephesians 1:13

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise"

The Bible tells us that God is both loving (1st John 4:8) and just (Deut. 32:4). God in His love desires a right relationship with everyone, but God in His justice cannot ignore sin. Man, by his nature and deeds, is a sinner (Romans 3:23). Sin results in separation (Isaiah 59:2) and death (Romans 6:23). Man, because of his sin, is separated from a right relationship with God; man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). Unless this condition of spiritual death is remedied in this life, it will lead to eternal death (Heb. 9:27, 2nd Thess. 1:8, 9), eternal separation from God.

The good news is that God sent his Son Jesus to save us from death and separation

and provide the way for us to have eternal life. Jesus is God the Son (John 1:1, 14, 17) and is the only way to God the Father (John 14:6). Jesus Christ came to die for our sins and provide the way back to God (1st Peter 3:18). Eternal life (salvation) is a free gift (Romans 6:23) offered to anyone who truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life (Acts 4:12, John 8:24).

The Bible says, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). We can't live the Christian life in our own strength, but God has provided all the resources we need--such as His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), His promises (2 Peter 1:4), and His grace (2 Corinthians 9:8)--to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Jesus promises an abundant, eternal life for all who put their trust in Him (John 10:10, John 5:24).

2. Eternal Life

John 5:24

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

Congratulations! If you have truly received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, then you have entered into a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17). Many wonderful things happened the moment you trusted Christ. The Bible says that you were sealed with the Holy Spirit--that is, the Holy Spirit came to take up permanent residence in your life (Ephesians 1:13). You also received total forgiveness for all your sins--past, present, and future (Acts 10:43, Colossians 2:13, 14).

Another wonderful benefit is the gift of eternal life. Your relationship with God will never cease! But sometimes circumstances may make you doubt your salvation. By memorizing the verse above, you will have God's word in your heart to overcome your doubts. Other verses: John 6:35-40, 10:27-30, Hebrews 10:10-17, 1 John 5:11-13.

3. Fellowship with God

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The Bible says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." --1 John 1:6-9

God desires that we live in fellowship with Him, but our sin can interrupt our fellowship. Sin can quench (1 Thess. 5:19) and grieve (Eph. 4:30) the Holy Spirit. God wants us to confess our sins (1 John 1:9). In the original Greek, the word translated as confess is *homologeō*--to speak the same. It means to agree with God about the sin.

Agreeing with God

We should agree that:

1. It is sin (1 Jn. 3:4, Rom. 14:23).
2. It is forgiven (Col. 2:13, 14).
3. We need God to overcome sin
(2 Cor. 3:5, Phil. 4:13, Gal. 5:16).

Then, as an act of faith, we should thank God for forgiving us and restoring us to fellowship with Him (Matt. 21:22, 1 Thess. 5:18).

4. Filled with the Spirit

Ephesians 5:18

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"

The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3, 4), the third person of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19, 20). When a person becomes a believer, the Holy Spirit comes into that person to be with him forever (Jn. 14:16, Rom. 8:9, Eph. 1:13). The Holy Spirit can empower us to live godly lives (Acts 1:8) and produce in us the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). What does this mean? Col. 3:16 is a direct parallel to Eph. 5:18. To be filled with the Spirit is to let the Word of Christ dominate us. The Word is the handle by which the Holy Spirit can turn our wills. Being filled with the Spirit means to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God's will as revealed in the Word of Christ.

In 1 Jn. 5:14, 15, we are promised that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. It is God's will that we be filled with the Spirit.

Steps for being filled with the Spirit

1. Confess your sins (agree with God about them) to restore fellowship (1 Jn. 1). Thank Him for your forgiveness (Acts 10:43, 1 Thess. 5:18).
2. Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you (Col. 3:16).
3. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit according to His command (Eph. 5:18) and His promise (1 Jn. 5:14, 15).
4. By faith (Matt. 21:22) thank Him for filling you with the Holy Spirit.

5. Obedience

John 14:21

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

Now that we are Christians God wants us to put off the old habits and ways that aren't pleasing to Him, and to put on a new way of living (Colossians 3:5-17). The Bible says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11, 12).

When a person becomes a Christian, he is not only delivered from the penalty of sin; he is also delivered from the power of sin. Paul learned the secret of living the Christian life: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Christ wants us to allow Him to be Lord of every aspect of our lives. As we obey Him, we demonstrate our love for Him (John 14:21).

6. Baptism

Acts 2:41

"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

A baby never has to walk to have life, but humanly speaking, he would never experience all that life could have for him. So it is for a Christian. When he is born again, he starts a new life. He begins to walk as he starts to obey the word. The first big step is what the Bible calls baptism. Baptism is not a condition of eternal salvation, but through it a person starts to experience the reality of obeying and walking with God.

In the New Testament people were baptized shortly after becoming true believers. Baptism is commanded (Acts 10:47, 48, Matthew 28:19, 20). A person can be baptized anyplace where there is enough water (Acts 8:36-39, John 3:23). Baptism is a symbol. When a believer goes under the water, it symbolizes that his old life is dead and buried with Christ. When he comes up out of the water, it symbolizes that he has been raised up to a new life (Colossians 2:12).

7. The Word

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

What book gives us the knowledge of God? The Bible. We also call it the word of God, Scripture, the Scriptures, and the Holy Bible. It was written by men of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Is it reasonable to believe? Yes! Manuscript evidence, archaeology, the unity of Scripture, and fulfilled prophecy are just a few of the areas that show us that the Bible is unique and true. We should believe it because of what Jesus Christ said about it (John 10:35, 17:17). The Bible is God's message to man. God gave it to us to reveal Jesus Christ (John 20:31), to reveal His plan of salvation (2 Timothy 3:15), to help us grow (1 Peter 2:2), to guide us (Psalm 119:105), to give us joy (Luke 11:28), and to help us know God (Proverbs 2:1-5). We are to obey it (James 1:22).

8. Prayer

Philippians 4:6, 7

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Prayer is communication with God (Psalm 116:1, 2). Communication is essential for a growing relationship. God wants us to talk to Him just as any father likes to hear from his child. He also wants us to ask Him for all the things we need to carry out His plan for our lives. John Wesley said, "God does nothing but in answer to prayer."

God communicates with us through the Bible and we communicate with Him through prayer. Many Christians combine Bible reading and prayer to have an appointment with God, sometimes called a "quiet time." This is a daily 10 or 15 minute habit that allows us to speak to God through prayer and that allows us to hear from God through the Bible.

The following acrostic--ACTS--has been useful to many for their prayers:

A--adoration--praise Him for who
He is (Hebrews 13:15)

C--confess--admit to God when
you've done wrong, and
thank Him for His
forgiveness (1 John 1:9,
Proverbs 28:13)

T--thanksgiving--thank Him for
what He has done (Eph. 5:20)

S--supplication--ask Him for things.
Pray for yourself and others
(Mt. 7)

9. The Church

Acts 2:42

"And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

The church in the New Testament was never a building but a company of true believers devoted in love to one another and to Christ. A person becomes a member of God's family of believers (the church) when he receives Christ (John 1:12).

In Acts 2:42 we see the early church being devoted to four things. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching (the teaching of the word). They were devoted to fellowship, which is companionship, sharing in common. Fellowship is essential (Hebrews 10:24, 25, 3:13). They were devoted to breaking of bread, an ordinance instituted by Jesus that we are to do in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:23-28). And they were devoted to prayer.

The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), the base from which winning the lost and building the saved are to occur.

10. Witnessing

Mark 5:19

"And He did not let him, but He said to him, 'Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.'"

A witness is someone who tells others what he knows. God wants us to tell others about what He has done for us. We witness to others by our life--God wants us to have a lifestyle characterized by righteousness, moral purity, and love. And we are to witness to others by our words by openly identifying ourselves with Christ and speaking to others the message of how man can be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18). Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory" (Luke 9:26). God will enable us to be His witnesses: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

11. Follow-Up

Acts 15:36

"And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.'"

Follow-up is the process through which believers are established with the basics of Christianity so that they can move on to spiritual maturity. All believers should be grounded in the basic areas mentioned in this article.

Follow-up is a first step in making disciples. Making disciples is essential to carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

12. Making Disciples

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

What is a disciple? The Greek word for disciple is *mathetes*, which means a learner; a disciple follows someone's teaching.

The Bible tells us what characterizes a disciple:

A disciple puts Jesus first in his life (Luke 14:26-35); he is willing to submit every area of his life to God, and to live for Him by His grace and provision, controlled and empowered by the Spirit of Christ (Gal. 2:20).

A disciple abides in God's word (John 8:31); that is, he has a stable belief in and understanding of the Scriptures as the basis of faith and the standard of life (2 Tim. 1:13, 3:14-17).

And a disciple bears fruit (Jn. 15:8); he increasingly displays the character of Christ in his nature and actions, and is involved in obeying Christ's command to make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20, Matt. 4:19).

Being a Disciple

1. Jesus First

Luke 14:26-27, 33

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple....So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”

As we come to Christ and learn from Him (Matthew 11:28-30), we can learn to trust Him and His ways. God loves us (Rom 5:8) and desires to bless our lives (Luke 11:28).

Because Jesus is God (John 1:1, 14), He should have priority in our lives.

A disciple puts Jesus first in his life (Luke 14:26-35); he is willing to submit every area of his life to God, and live for Him by His grace and provision, controlled and

empowered by the Spirit of Christ (2 Cor. 5:15, Rom 12:1, 2 Chron. 16:9, John 14:21, Gal 2:20).

2. The Word

John 8:31-32

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

"The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work."

--2 Timothy 3:17 *Phillips*

Jesus said, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The Bible, God's word (John 10:35) is the truth that a disciple studies and practices.

A disciple abides in God's word (John 8:31); that is, he has a stable belief in and understanding of the Scriptures as the basis of faith and the standard of life (Matthew 7:24-27, Ephesians 4:14, 1 Tim 4:6, 2 Tim 1:13, 3:14-17, Rom. 10:17, Acts 20:32, James 1:22-25).

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly

state this from the experience of 54 years.
The first four years after conversion I
neglected the Word of God...I remained a
babe, both in knowledge and grace. Since I
began to search it diligently the blessing has
been wonderful." --George Muller

3. Fruit

John 15:7-8

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

"You bear inner fruit when you allow God to nurture in you a new, Christlike quality: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control' (Galatians 5:22).

"You bear outward fruit when you allow God to work through you to bring Him glory. That would certainly include sharing your faith. The apostles saw every arena of life as an opportunity to bear fruit."

--Bruce Wilkinson

A disciple increasingly displays the character of Christ in his nature and actions, and is involved in obeying Christ's command to make disciples (Gal. 5:22, Matt. 28:18-20, Matt. 4:19, John 17:18-20, Gal. 4:19, Col. 1:28, 29).

4. Share the Gospel

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Why should Christians be involved in sharing the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ? One reason is because it is God's desire that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3,4), and the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). Every believer has been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21); every believer is responsible for sharing the good news with others (John 17:18-20, 1 Tim. 1:15, 1 Pet. 2:9, 3:15, Acts 8:1-4, 1 Thess. 1:5-10, Eph. 4:11,12, Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15).

“Being a disciple begins with a proper relationship to Jesus Christ and having on your heart what is on His. Making disciples begins with evangelism. As one person put it, the objective in the Christian life is to populate heaven and depopulate hell.

“In evangelism the Christian’s pacesetter is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself....Jesus said that His food was to do God’s will. This is what concerned Him, what was uppermost in His mind....People shun evangelism because they say it is not their strength, it is not their gift, or they do not enjoy doing it. I can certainly empathize with that....If you do not enjoy engaging people in spiritual combat, don’t feel that you stand alone. Few people enjoy it. That really is not the question, nor is the question one of whether evangelism is your gift or your strength. The only relevant question is whether it is the will of God--and we know from the Scriptures that the will of God is for us to do the work of evangelism.”

--From *Disciples are Made--Not Born*
by Walter Henrichsen

As we share the good news we should be motivated by love (1st John 4:16, 1 Cor. 16:14). We should not be ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17). We should share with sincerity (2 Cor. 2:17, 1 Cor. 1:17) and have a life that backs up what we say (2 Cor. 4:2, Acts 24:16). We should always be ready to share the good news (1 Pet. 3:15). We should adapt ourselves to our audience (1 Cor. 9:19-23, 10:23, 31-33), yet without

sinning. We should pray for ourselves (James 1:5, 1 Cor. 15:10, 2 Cor. 9:8, Acts 4:31) and for the one with whom we are sharing (Rom. 10:1, Acts 16:14, John 16:8). Finally, we should rejoice that Christ is proclaimed no matter what happens (Phil. 1:18).

5. Share Your Testimony

1 Peter 3:15

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

Among the most powerful resources available to you in sharing the gospel is your personal testimony. A well-presented account of what God has done in your life can help people to relate to the good news with interest and understanding, instead of immediate rejection of “religious talk.”

By writing your testimony, you will become more familiar with it so that you can more readily share it with others. You will also have a useful and personal tool that can be easily reproduced for giving to others. Consider the following verses:

1 Peter 3:15--always ready...give an account

Mark 5:19--report to them what great things the Lord has done for you

1 Timothy 1:13-16, Acts 22:1-21, 26:1-29, Titus 3:3-7--Paul's example

1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 4:9--imitate Paul

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10--the Thessalonians

Guidelines:

1. Make it personal; don't preach or use Christian jargon that is hard to understand.
2. Make it short--200 to 500 words or less.
3. Keep Christ central--highlight what He has done.
4. Use one or two verses to add power to your message.

Steps:

1. Past Life--Before Salvation

What were you living for? What were your past circumstances, philosophies, goals, fears, weaknesses, or struggles? (Of course, you will want to leave out unnecessary or inappropriate details.) What things helped to make salvation a desirable thing for you?

2. How It Happened

What events led up to your conversion? How was the gospel communicated to you? What Bible verses affected you the most?

What was your response? How did you trust Christ?

3. New Life

How has your life truly changed as a result of your relationship with the Lord Jesus?

Write a first draft, then a second in which you try to improve the flow and logic of your story. Let someone read your second draft to critique it. Then write a final draft. By writing your personal testimony you can let others know what great things the Lord has done for you!

6. Bible Intake

2 Tim. 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

Many verses indicate that the Scriptures are necessary for the believer's growth and maturity. For instance, 1st Peter 2:2 says, "like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation". In addition, 2nd Timothy 3:17 declares, "The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work" (2nd Timothy 3:17, Phillips). There are several methods of Scripture intake. Just as a hand has five fingers to grasp objects, so there are five ways to "grasp" the truths of the Bible: hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and meditating.

Hearing

We can hear the truths of the Scriptures when we gather with other Christians for Bible study or by listening to sermons. We

can also listen to good radio programs. Another way of hearing the word is by listening to tapes. The Bible itself is available on tape, as well as many expositional and topical sermons about Bible truths. Romans 10:17 declares, “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

Reading

Reading is an important method of Scripture intake. The Old Testament kings were instructed to read the Scriptures every day (Deuteronomy 17:19); readers of the last book of the Bible are promised a blessing (Revelation 1:3). Timothy was instructed to “give attention to the public reading of Scripture” (1st Timothy 4:13). By reading one chapter from the New Testament and 3 chapters from the Old Testament each day, the entire Bible can be read in a single year. The Bible Survey Reading Plan, found elsewhere in this booklet, is a good place to start for someone who has never read the Bible.

Studying

Bible study is an important part of the process of becoming more Christlike. Ezra was a man “who set his heart to study the

law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). The one who studies God’s word faithfully, prays for understanding (Psalm 119:18, John 14:26, 1st Corinthians 2:12), and diligently applies the Scriptures to his life (James 1:22-25), will experience a changed life that will increasingly glorify God.

Principles of Interpretation

1. The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture.
2. Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures.
3. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.
4. Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.
5. Church history is important but not decisive in the interpretation of Scripture.
6. The promises of God throughout the Bible are available to the Holy Spirit for the believers of every generation.

7. Grammatical principles: Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken literally; words should be interpreted in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author; words should be interpreted in relation to their sentences and the context; and a passage should be interpreted in harmony with its context.

The late Dr. David Cooper has stated it well: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.”

Book Study and Chapter Analysis

Here are some steps for studying a book of the Bible:

1. Read the book all the way through at least once.
2. Use a study Bible, Bible handbook, or Bible dictionary to determine who wrote the book, when and where was it written, to whom it was written, and why. What information do the Gospels or Acts give on

the book? What are the key words that are emphasized or frequently repeated?

3. Study the book chapter by chapter, using the following steps:

- a. Re-read the chapter.
- b. Write a chapter title that describes what the chapter is about.
- c. List the key verse.
- d. Make a summary or outline of the chapter:

(1) For each verse or groups of related verses write down a brief summary of what the verse says.

(2) List cross-references that help to explain the verses.

(3) Write down relevant definitions, questions, etc.

(4) Write illustrations and applications for the chapter.

4. Make a summary of the entire book:

a. List chapter titles, key verses, and a brief summary of each chapter.

b. Write a title for the book.

c. List main lessons and challenges, and applications.

Memorizing

“Probably no method of Scripture intake pays higher dividends for the time invested than Scripture memory.” --Walter Henrichsen, author of *Disciples are Made-Not Born*. Proverbs 22:17, 18 says, “Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge; for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be ready on your lips.” Colossians 3:16 instructs us to “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.” What are some of the benefits of memorizing Scripture? It can help you have victory over sin (Psalms 119:9, 11), give you confidence in witnessing (1st Peter 3:15), give you joy (Jeremiah 15:16), help you pray more effectively (John 15:7), and help you grow (1st Peter 2:2).

Jesus could quote Scripture (Matthew 4), and so could Paul (Acts 13), as well as other godly men. We should follow their example!

Meditating

Meditation is like chewing. Just as a cow takes in food and then chews it, partially digests it, and then chews it again until finally the food is transformed into building-

blocks for the restoration and growth of the cow's body, so in meditation Scripture is "chewed" or analyzed, carefully thought about until it can be applied in our lives. We meditate in order to do. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success" (Joshua 1:8). James 1:22-25 declares, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."

7. Basic Doctrines

1 Tim 4:6

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

a. Faith

“Faith is the assurance that the thing which God has said in His Word is true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word...Faith is not a matter of impressions, nor of probabilities, nor of appearances.” --George Muller

1. What faith is: Hebrews 11:1, 6; Romans 4:1-5, 4:20, 21; Acts 27:25

2. How God has revealed Himself to us:
Creation--Romans 1:18-20;

Incarnation--Hebrews 1:1-3; Written
Revelation--2 Timothy 3:16, 17

3. Hindrances to faith-John 3:18-21, 5:44, 7:17

4. The Christian life is begun by faith (Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:13). After a person becomes a Christian, he is to continue to live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:6, 7). How can we grow in faith?

God--Romans 12:3; Heb. 12:2; John 15:26

Prayer--Mark 9:24; Luke 22:32

Word--Romans 10:17; 2 Peter 1:4

Other believers--Hebrews 13:7; Rom. 1:12

Obedience--James 2:22; John 14:21

5. In 2nd Peter 1:4 we learn that God “has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature....”

Consider the following promises:

Psalm 37:4-good life

Rom. 8:28-all things for good

1 Corinthians 10:13-no temptation

Philippians 4:13-can do all things

2 Corinthians 9:8, 12:9-grace

b. Living the New Life

“The responsibility of the saint is to desire to live a Christlike life, to depend upon the Holy Spirit for the power to live that life, and to step out in faith and live that life. This fulfilled will bring all the infinite resources of grace to the aid of the saint and put in operation all the activities of the Spirit in his behalf.” –Kenneth S. Wuest

1. Who should live holy lives? 1 Peter 2:24, 1:14-16

2. How can we live holy lives? 1 Peter 2:1,2; Ephesians 4:22-24

3. When should we live holy lives? 1 Peter 4:2, 3; Acts 24:14-16

4. Why should we live holy lives? Titus 2:11-13; 1st Corinthians 3:10-15

“The Christian life is not necessarily an easy one; don’t think that your troubles ceased the moment you received Christ. In certain ways they increased, but the great difference is that now you have a Lord who understands you perfectly and has the answers to all your problems. God in His grace has provided a full and complete salvation in His Son. Christ in you offers you the strength to serve God and live a life of abundant joy. This life is for the person who says with Paul, ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20).”

--from *Christ in You* by IVCF

1. Benefits of our new life from God--2nd Corinthians 5:17; 1st John 5:13; Acts 10:43;

Ephesians 1:13,14; Galatians 5:22,23;
Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 11:6

2. Adversaries to righteous living--1st John
2:15-17; Galatians 5:13-21; Ephesians 6:10-
13

3. Temptation--James 1:13-15; 1st
Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 5:16

4. Sin--Romans 8:2; Proverbs 28:13; 1st
John 1:9

5. Christians may have times of suffering
(Romans 5:12; 8:18-21; 1st Peter 4:12-19;
James 1:2-4). Sometimes we may not
understand why someone has to suffer
(Deuteronomy 29:29). Yet Who is in
ultimate control? Romans 8:28; Genesis
50:20

6. Our response to the suffering we endure is
important (Hebrews 12:5, 6, 15; Job 1:21).
What can result from our enduring
suffering? Hebrews 12:10, 11; 2nd
Corinthians 1:3, 4

7. Obtaining guidance for decisions in life--
2nd Timothy 3:16, 17; Isaiah 8:20; James

1:5; Colossians 3:20; Romans 13:1-7; Acts
5:29; 13:1-3; 14:21-23; Proverbs 12:15;
11:14; 15:22; 3:5,6

c. The Christian Family in Focus

Upward Focus

The Devotional Life

Unless the Lord builds the house--Psalm 127

Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord--
Psalm 128

The Word--Luke 11:28, 2nd Tim. 3:16, 17

Prayer--Psalm 116:1, 2, John 15:7

Inward Focus

Roles and Responsibilities

Family-Ephesians 5:22-33, Col. 3:16-21

Wives-Titus 2:4, 5

Fathers-Ephesians 6:4

Children--Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20

Child training-Deut. 6:6, 7, Prov. 22:6,

13:24, 29:17

Other verses Eph. 4:29-32, Prov. 17:1, 13:20

Outward Focus

The Great Commission

Hospitality-Rom. 12:13, 1st Pet. 4:9

Aquila and Priscilla-Acts 18:2, 3, 18, 19, 24-26, 1st Cor. 16:19, Rom. 16:3-5

d. The Church

1st Timothy 3:14, 15

“I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

“The church has been ordained by God to be the primary instrument through which His work on earth is to be accomplished. Here Paul uses three phrases to describe three aspects of the church:

“(1) The house of God: The Christian family, with husband, wife, and children performing their God-given roles, provides a beautiful picture of the relationship of the

church (the ‘bride’ of Christ) to the Lord. The household of God consists of a family of believers where love controls and where He is honored. ‘Ye also, as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ’ (1st Peter 2:5).

“(2) The church of the Living God: The ekklesia, or ‘called-out ones,’ serve the living God. ‘The blood of Christ (shall)...purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God’ (Hebrews 9:14).

“(3) The pillar and ground of the truth: A pillar of a building is not used for support, but rather for display, by elevating or calling attention to something else. The ground provides the support. The church should function to support and display the whole truth in such a way that all men can see and believe it.

“It should be a family of believers exhibiting brotherly love, individually and corporately serving the living God out of a

pure conscience, defending the truth, and displaying it to the lost. May each of us as church members enjoy and support such a church.’’

--John D. Morris, Ph.D.

1. What it is--1 Tim. 3:15, Eph. 1:22, 23, Acts 20:28, Acts 2:41-47

2. Membership--Eph. 1:13,14, 1st Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:28, Col. 3:11

3. Leaders (who they are)--1 Tim. 3:1-13, Tit. 1:5-9, Acts 20:17, 28, Phil. 1:1

4. Leaders (what they do)--Eph. 4:11-13, 1 Pet. 5:1-4

5. Finances--Pro 3:9, 10, 1 Cor. 16:1, 2, Gal. 6:6, 1 Tim- 5:9-18, 1 John 3:16-18, Luke. 6:38

6. Ordinances--1 Cor. 11:23-30, Acts 8:12

7. Gifts--Rom. 12:1-8, 1 Pet. 4:10, 11

8. Fellowship--Eph. 4:14-16, John 13:34, 35

9. Prayer--Heb. 13:15, Acts 4:31

10. Evangelism--Acts 8:1-4, Matt. 28:18-20

e. God

“The Doctrine of God is the same in all three branches of Christianity. The Westminster Shorter Catechism (Question 6) reads, ‘There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.’ The Athanasian Creed elaborates on the doctrine of the Trinity: ...we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance [Essence]. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate...The Father

eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal...So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God...the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

“...The facts of the biblical teaching are these: There is one God. This one God has a plural personality. This one God is called the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, all distinct personalities, all designated God. We are therefore led to the conclusion that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God, the doctrine of the Trinity.”

--Josh McDowell, “The Beliefs of Orthodox Christianity”

1. God Reveals Himself

Creation -Romans 1:19, 20 Prophets-
Hebrews 1:1 Christ- Hebrews 1:2 (John
14:9)

Conscience-Romans 2:15

Scripture--2nd Peter 1:21, 2nd Tim. 3:16, 17

2. God's Attributes

Everlasting--Is. 40:28

Immutable--James 1:17

Can't lie--Num. 23:19

Compassionate--Ps. 103:8-14

Holy--1 Pet. 1:15, 16

Righteous--Ps. 11:7

Just--Deut. 32:4

Love--1 John 4:8

Forgiving--Ps. 130:3, 4

Omnipotent--Jer. 32:17

Omniscient--1st John 3:20

Omnipresent--Jer. 23:24

Sovereign--1 Tim. 6:15

Glorious--1st Chron. 29:10-13

3. The Trinity

God is one--Deut. 6:4--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--Matt. 28:19, 20

Father--John 6:27

Son--Heb. 1:8

Holy Spirit--Acts 5:3, 4

4. Roles in the Trinity

Father--John 3:16, Hebrews 12:9

Son--Col. 1:15-18, Gal 4:4, 5, Heb. 4:14-16

Holy Spirit--John 14:16, John 16:7-15, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 1:13, 1st Cor. 12:12, 13, 1st Cor. 6:19, 20, Rom. 8:9, Acts 1:8, Eph. 5:18, Gal. 5:16, 22, 23, 1st Thess. 5:19, Eph. 4:30

f. Angels, Demons, and Satan

Angels

1. Who they are--Hebrews 1:14, 2nd Peter 2:11, Genesis 18:2, 16, 19:1, 11
2. Unfallen angels--Matt. 18:10, 22:30, 26:53, Luke 15:10, 16:22, 1st Cor. 11:10, Eph. 3:10, 1st Pet. 1:12, Rev. 5:11, 12
3. Fallen angels--Rev. 12:9, Matt. 9:32,33, 25:41, Mark 5:9, 15, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6

Satan

1. Who he is--Is. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:14-19, Eph. 2:2, John 12:31, 2nd Cor. 4:4, 1st Pet. 5:8, 2nd Cor. 11:14
2. What he does--2nd Cor. 2:11, Gen. 3:1-5, 1st John 2:15, 16, Luke 8:11, 12, 2nd Cor. 4:3,4, Eph. 6:16, Acts 5:3, John 8:44, Deut. 18:10-12, 1 Tim. 4:1

3. Believer's resources--Acts 26:18, Heb. 2:14-18, Col. 1:13, James 4:7, 2 Cor. 10:3-5, Eph. 6:10, 11

g. Hope

1. What hope is: Romans 8:24, 25; 1st Peter 1:3-5; 1st Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:27

2. Importance: 1st Corinthians 15:19; Hebrews 6:19

3. Hope in this present life: Romans 8:28; Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:5, 6; Psalm 27:13

4. Hope in the life to come: 1st Thessalonians 4:16--18; Titus 2:13

5. What will happen when He returns: Philippians 3:20,21; 1st John 3:2,3; 1st Corinthians 3:8-15; 2nd Corinthian 5:10; Revelation 5:9,10; 20:6

6. What things will be like in the future: Revelation 21:3, 4; 2nd Peter 3:10-13

7. What can we learn about hope in the following verses? Colossians 1:4, 5; 1st Thessalonians 1:3; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18

8. Developing hope: Romans 15:4, 13; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Romans 5:1-5; Ephesians 1:18; 1st Peter 1:13

8. Bible Overview

1 Pet 2:2

like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

“Here’s a one-paragraph description of Old Testament history: After God created everything, He judged the blatant sin of mankind through a worldwide Flood and then scattered men from Babel’s tower. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and Joseph were the founding fathers of the Hebrew people. After developing into a great nation and being enslaved in Egypt, the Israelites were delivered under Moses. They were taught, tested, disciplined, and retaught in the wilderness until Joshua led them into their Promised land. They were ruled by a succession of fourteen judges followed by kings Saul, David, and Solomon. After King Solomon, the Hebrew kingdom was divided into Northern and Southern Kingdoms. After the rules of nineteen wicked kings, Israel was taken from the north and scattered by Assyria. After the rules of twenty southern kings, Judah was taken into captivity in

Babylon. While Ezra and Nehemiah were leading the Jews back home to Judah, Esther was a savior-queen in Persia. Four hundred “silent years” passed between that time and the beginning of the New Testament.

“Here’s a one-paragraph New Testament history: After a 400-year “silent” period, the biblical account picks up again with the births of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. After about 30 years, John called the Jewish nation to a baptism of repentance. Jesus Christ, God’s flesh-and-blood Son, showed the world what God is like and taught the perfect ways of God for about three years. After preparing twelve disciples to continue His work in the world, Jesus willingly died on a cross for the sins of all mankind, arose from the dead, and returned to heaven. Given power by the Holy Spirit, the disciples spread the Good News about Jesus’ salvation, mainly among the Jews. The Apostle Paul carried the Gospel to the Gentiles through extensive missionary journeys and wrote at least thirteen of the New Testament letters. The Apostle John recorded the Revelation, a forward look to God’s program for this world till the end of

time. The Bible ends as it began--with God completely in charge of His Creation, with no evil opposition.” --Terry Hall

9. Memorizing Scripture

Col 3:16

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

The Gospel

God—1 John 4:8, Deut. 32:4

Man—Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23

Jesus—John 1:1, 14, 1 Pet. 3:18

Must Believe—Jn. 3:16, Acts 16:31

Follow-Up

Assurance—Jn. 5:24, 1 Jn. 5:11-13

Quiet Time—2 Tim. 3:16, 17,

Phil. 4:6, 7

Obedience—John 14:21,

Tit. 2:11, 12

Baptism—Acts 2:41, Matt. 28:19, 20

Discipleship

Jesus First—Luke 9:23, Gal. 2:20

The Word—Jn. 8:31, 32, 2 Tim. 2:15

Fruit—John 15:7, 8, Matt. 4:19

Love— John 13:34, 35, 1 John 3:16

The Church

Leaders--Tit. 1:6-9, Eph. 4:11, 12

Fellowship--Heb. 3:13,

Heb. 10:24, 25

Gifts--1 Pet. 4:10, 11, Rom. 12:4-8

Purpose--Acts 2:42, 1 Tim. 3:15

Spiritual Disciplines

Study--1 Pet. 2:2, James 1:21-25

Prayer--Ps. 116:1, 2, John 16:24

Service--Mark 10:45, Gal. 5:13

Worship--Heb. 13:15, 16,

1 Pet. 2:5, 9

Live Righteously

Separate from world--1 Jn. 2:15, 16,

Rom. 12:1, 2

Purity--Eph. 5:3, 1 Pet. 2:11

Faith--Heb. 11:6, Rom. 4:20, 21

Good works--Gal. 6:9, 10, Matt. 5:16

10. Love

John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

““My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth’ (1st John 3:18). The little word ‘love’ is probably the most overused and misused word in our language. ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins’ (1st John 4:10). ‘Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another’ (1st John 4:11). True love in our own lives is manifest in a number of vital ways. First of all, it is evidenced by our guarding the integrity of His Word: ‘Whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected’ (1st John 2:5). Next, it involves separation from the world: ‘If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him’ (1st John 2:15). Obedience is another

evidence: ‘For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments’ (1st John 5:3). ‘And this is love, that we walk after His commandments’ (2nd John 6). True love is courageous and confident in all circumstances. ‘There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear’ (1st John 4:18). Such love will give up possessions or even life itself for the brethren....Love therefore, is not something we write about or talk about (‘word or tongue), but something we do, ‘in deed and in truth.’ Love is always best measured in terms of the love of God Himself. ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John 3:16).”

--Henry M. Morris, Ph.D.

1. What love is: 1st Corinthians 13; 1st Timothy 1:5
2. God’s love for us: Romans 5:8; 1st John 4:10; Romans 8:38, 39; Psalm 103:11-14
3. Our love for God: 1st John 4:19; Matthew 22:37-39; John 14:21; 13:34, 35; Luke 6:27
4. Our love for people: 1st John 4:7, 8; Galatians 5:22, 23; 2nd Peter 1:4-8

Consider the following verses:

Golden rule -Matthew 7:12

Thoughts-Hebrews 10:24, 25

Words-Ephesians 4:29

Deeds-Titus 3:14, 1st John 3:16-18

No selfishness--Philippians 2:3, 4

Forgive- Ephesians 4:31, 32

Go to others -Matthew 5:23, 24; 18:15

Give-Luke 6:38

Serve-Galatians 5:13

Win-1st Corinthians 9:19-23

Build-Colossians 1:28, 29

5. What motivated Paul? 2nd Corinthians
5:14, 15

11. Spiritual Multiplication

2 Tim 2:2

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

"Everyone should be born again....A person is born again when he receives Jesus Christ....It is God's plan that these new babes in Christ grow. All provision is made for their growth into maturity, and then they are to multiply....Every one of His children ought to be a reproducer....Men, where is your man? Women, where is your woman? Where is your girl? Where is the one whom you led to Christ and who is now going on with Him?" --Dawson Trotman

If a person led another person to the Lord in a year, and then each one of them led a new person to the Lord the next year, and the process continued unbroken, then by year five there would be 32 believers. By year ten there would be 1024, and by year twenty over a million. And by year thirty-three, over eight billion.

12. Make Disciples

Matt 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Bible declares that God is love (1 John 4:8). God doesn't desire the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11); He is "not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). (See also 1 Timothy 2:3, 4.)

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). People can be restored to a right relationship with God by hearing the good news and believing it (Romans 1:16, John 3:16). After this they are to learn how to walk in His ways (Col. 2:6, 7, James 1:21-25).

The Greek word for disciple is *mathetes*, which means *learner*. A disciple is someone who is learning to follow Christ's teachings.

"The essence of discipleship is becoming like the Master, and this is brought about by

systematic teaching of, and submission to, the Word." --William MacDonald

"Making disciples is essential to carrying out the Great Commission, and being a disciple is essential to making disciples. It is interesting to note that Jesus Christ did not begin His program of reaching the world with perfect people. He began with ordinary people whom he could use, people who were not perfect....All of us should seek to do all we can to be disciples and to make disciples." --Francis Cosgrove

Paul could say, "Be imitators of me, just as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul labored with people to help them mature in Christ and develop Christlikeness (Gal. 4:19, Col. 1:28, 29, Eph. 4:11-13).

"Multiplying disciples is the New Testament vision and method for getting the job done....It has been on His heart from the beginning of time. Just as He set up the physical propagation of the human race on a multiplying basis, He has likewise set up the spiritual propagation of the human race on a multiplying basis." --Walter Henrichsen

The Church

1. The Assembly

1 Tim 3:15

but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, from *ek*, out of, and *klesis*, a calling. It means a gathering or assembly. The church in the New Testament was a company of true believers devoted in love to Christ and to one another.

The church has been ordained by God to be the primary instrument through which His work on earth is to be accomplished. The church is variously described as a building (Eph. 2:20-22), a household (Eph. 2:19), and Christ's body (Eph. 1:22, 23). As members of His body, each individual is important (1 Cor. 12). Christ gives to each

believer, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, some gift or gifts to equip him to serve the Lord and edify other believers (1 Pet. 4:10, 11; also Rom. 12, Eph. 4).

The church is also pictured as the pillar and support of the truth. "Oftentimes a pillar was set up in a public marketplace and notices were posted on it. It was thus a proclaimer. The church is the unit on earth which God has chosen to proclaim and display His truth."

“Does the New Testament list a certain number of requisites or essentials of a local church? ...We would suggest that this is not the case....Instead of that, we believe that the New Testament approach is this. All believers are instructed that, by the grace of God, they are members of the church. Then they are exhorted to gather together in such a way as to give expression to the great truths of the church. Some assemblies of Christians give a very poor representation of the body of Christ. Other groups present a more faithful likeness. None does so perfectly. Thus...the language of Scripture is the language of grace; namely, ‘You as believers are the church; now meet in such a manner as to give an accurate expression of this fact to the world.’”

--William MacDonald

2. Priesthood of Believers

1 Pet 2:5, 9

you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ....But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession....

Conspicuously absent from the New Testament church were professional clergymen and a laity of spectators. Instead, all believers were a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9). As priests they were to offer sacrifices of their persons (Rom. 12:1), praises (Heb. 13:15), and possessions (Heb. 13:16). They were to perform ministries of prayer (1 Tim. 2:1, 2), sympathy (Rom 12:15), instruction (1 Peter 2:9), and proclaiming the gospel (Rom.15:16).

“All believers are altogether priests, and let it be anathema to assert that there is any other priest than he who is Christian; for it will be asserted without the Word of God, on no authority but the sayings of men, or the antiquity of custom, or the multitude of those that think so.” --Martin Luther

3. Spiritual Gifts

1 Pet 4:10-11

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Christ gives to each believer, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, some gift or gifts to equip him to serve the Lord and edify other believers. The tendency of allowing the ministry to fall into the hands of one man should be resisted; instead, the Holy Spirit should be free to use the various gifts which Christ has given to the church.

“For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have

gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” -- Rom. 12:4-8

Additional Verses

Rom 12--gifts

1 Cor. 12-14--many members, one body

Eph. 4--equipping of the saints for the work

1 Pet. 4:10, 11--each one received a gift

Heb. 2:1-4 (1 Cor. 13:8-13)--sign gifts

4. Leaders

Titus 1:5-9

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Leaders in the New Testament were not a separate class; instead, they were mature believers who led by teaching and example. Leaders were warned in the Scriptures not to “lord it over” those in their care. The example of Scripture points to a plurality of leaders in the local church, not a single pastor.

In Acts 20 we see different terms used to describe the same people. The term elder describes their character--they were spiritually mature men. The term bishop or overseer describes their responsibility--to look over and guard those in their care. And the term shepherd or pastor describes their work--to feed and care for the flock.

Elders in the New Testament were assisted by deacons (deacon means servant), spiritually mature men who helped to take care of physical needs, as well as other tasks.

It is our belief that elders should be the highest authority in the local church--there shouldn't be a federation of churches, a "bishop" over a diocese, or a superintendent over an area. Instead, leadership should be in the hands of local men who are qualified according to 1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1, not according to a prescribed sequence of preparation.

Additional Verses

1 Tim. 3:1-13, Tit. 1:5-9, Acts 6:3--
qualifications

Heb. 11:7, 8, 17, 24-26, 1 Chron. 12:32, 33--
qualities

Heb. 13:17--obey

1 Thess. 5:12, 13--highly regard

Eph. 4:11-13--leaders equip the saints
Acts 5:42--teaching and preaching
Acts 11:26--leaders train the saints
Acts 20:17, 28--elder, overseer (bishop),
shepherd (pastor)
Phil. 1:1, Acts 15:16, Tit. 1:5--plurality
Tit. 1:5, Acts 14:21-23--leaders appointed
1 Pet. 5:1-4--elders, examples to the flock
1 Tim. 5:19, 20--accusation against elder

5. Teaching

Eph. 4:11-13

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.”

One of the ways leaders in the church can equip believers for the work of service is to faithfully teach God’s word. The Bible declares, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” Everything we need to know in order to live the Christian life can be found in the pages of the Bible.

P.E.A. is an acrostic that can be helpful in teaching the Scriptures:

P: Principle--the central truth of the passage that is being considered

E: Example--illustrations that help to clarify the truth being presented

A: Application--how this truth can be applied in our personal lives

Messages may be topical, biographical, or expository. A topical message tells what the Bible says about a particular subject. A biographical message tells about the biblical account of the life of a particular individual, and the lessons to be learned from it. And an expository message consists of the opening up, or the unfolding and explaining of a portion of Scripture.

Illustrations can clarify the truths to be presented. They assist argument, help the hearer to remember, stimulate the imagination, bridge difficult places, and enforce the truth. Sources: the Scriptures, history, nature, magazine or newspaper articles, poetry, fiction, or personal experience.

The goal of teaching is to understand and apply God's word. "And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to

give the sense so that they understood the reading” (Nehemiah 8:8). “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22).

6. Fellowship

Heb 10:24-25

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*, which means communion or sharing in common. Christians share together a common inheritance, a cooperative service, and a reciprocal responsibility. Christians are all members of one body, and are to love one another and build up one another, as well as share in the ministry of reconciliation.

In 1 Corinthians 14:26, Paul wrote, “What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” Men may wish to share a word of testimony about what God is doing in their lives. They may have a word of exhortation or encouragement from the Scriptures. Or they may wish to sing a

particular hymn. The goal is to build up the believers: “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Eph 4:15-16). “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Additional Verses

2 Cor. 1:4--comfort

Eccles. 4:9, 10--two better than one

1 Jn. 1:3-7--fellowship with us

Pro. 13:20--walk with wise

Col. 3:16--psalms, hymns

1 Cor. 14:26--psalm, teaching

1 Cor. 8:1--love edifies

Eph. 4:11-16--every joint

1 Thess. 2:8--shared lives

Jn. 13:34, 35--love one another

1 Thess. 5:11, 14--build up one another

Heb. 10:24, 25--encourage one another

1 Cor. 16:20--greet one another
Gal. 5:13--serve one another
Gal. 6:2--bear one another's burdens
Rom. 12:5--members one of another
Rom 12:10--be devoted to one another
Rom. 15:7--accept one another
Rom. 15:14--admonish one another
Eph. 4:2--forbearance to one another
Eph. 4:32--kind to one another
Eph. 6:18--pray for one another

7. Worship

Heb 13:15-16

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Churches were gatherings of believers for worship. Worship is adoration, the honor and reverence and homage paid to God, an acknowledgment of divine perfections. In the Old Testament, saints worshipped by sacrifices in the Temple. New Testament saints were to bring sacrifices of praise to God, thanking Him for who He is and what He has done. New Testament sacrifices also included doing good (good deeds--Tit. 3:14) and sharing (koinonia, sharing a common social and spiritual life, as well as sharing financially). Believers are also instructed in Romans 12:1 to present their bodies a living and holy sacrifice, which is their spiritual service of worship.

8. Lord's Supper

Acts 20:7

And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

This is a worship time, a time to remember our Lord Jesus, His Person and His work. In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 we read, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”

Participation is for true believers in Himself who are not practicing moral wrongs, nor holding teachings contrary to the Scriptures. This time is open to the

guidance of the Holy Spirit, where believing men may take part in an orderly manner. This may include requesting a hymn, or leading in prayerful thanksgiving and praise to God. It may also include the reading of an appropriate Scripture portion, with, perhaps, a comment. In this time we seek to intelligently remember Jesus' Person and work, and in particular, His work at Calvary.

Additional Verses

Luke 22:14-20--Jesus

1 Cor. 11:23-30--instructions

1 Cor. 10:16, 17--one bread

Acts 2:42, 46, 20:7--example of once a week

9. Women's Role

Gal 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Scripture declares that "...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:28); women are fellow-heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Although women are of equal worth and value in the sight of God as men, the Bible does portray different roles for men and women. As believers we should follow the instructions found in His Word.

"The role of women in the assembly is one of silence in the church. The New Testament exhorts the woman not to teach or rule over man in the church. But she is given the privilege of showing in symbol the church's subjection to the Lord by praying with her head covered...."

"Her sphere of service includes homemaking, kindness and good works, private instruction--particularly to the younger women, and her personal testimony...." --Merrill Oster

Additional Verses

Gal.3:28--neither male nor female

1 Pet. 3:7--fellow-heir, honor

1 Cor. 11:2-16--woman subject

1 Cor. 14:34, 35--silent; not ask questions

1 Tim. 2:11-15--instructions

1 Cor. 11:5-10--head uncovered

Tit. 2:4, 5--teaching younger women

1 Pet. 3:1-4--gentle and quiet spirit

10. Finances

Prov. 3:9-10

Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

The church should receive its finances from those who are within. Christian giving is an act of worship. All that a Christian has belongs to God; believers are to act as stewards, using all he has to bring glory to God. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 16:2, “Now concerning the collection for the saints....On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper....” Funds of the church should be used for widows in the assembly, for the poor saints, and for those who devote their time to the work of the Lord.

Additional Verses

Prov. 3:9, 10--honor Lord

2 Cor. 9:6-15--cheerful giver

1 Cor. 16:2--1st day of week

Gal. 6:6--one taught share

1 Tim. 5:17, 18--support leaders

1 Tim. 5:9, 10--widows

1 Jn. 3:17, 18, Acts 6:1-6--those in need

Luke 6:38, Phil. 4:19--promises

1 Tim. 6:9-11--warning

Acts 20:35--more blessed

11. Church Discipline

1 Cor. 5:11

But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one.

“A church’s testimony is not harmed by people of all sorts attending gospel services or other meetings where the Bible is preached or taught. But as soon as people are allowed to partake of the communion and are recognized as in fellowship with the believers as fellow-Christians, it becomes the duty of the leadership of the church to discipline any who lead lives that are immoral or careless, or any who spread false doctrine. Many churches have no discipline at all today for fear of losing members. Also a person may be under discipline in one area or group and then be accepted in another as if nothing were wrong. The whole purpose of discipline is to restore the erring ones to fellowship. Tact and grace are imperative in this, but if the church is to be holy, as God commands, warnings must be made to the

unruly (1 Thessalonians 5:14). The disorderly are to be avoided (2 Thessalonians 3:11, 14, 15) along with those who sow discord (Romans 16:17), and heretics are to be flatly rejected (Titus 3:10). A heretic in the New Testament is one who causes division by embracing false views on important doctrinal matters. The final form of discipline is excommunication (1 Corinthians 5:11, 13). This should be done gravely, and should extend to the immoral, greedy, idolatrous, railing, drunken, and extortioners. All discipline should be fair, and church matters should be kept within the confines of the congregation. If some of the totally disqualified persons now claiming fellowship in certain otherwise sound congregations were disciplined, perhaps we would see more of God's blessing in the gospel testimony.”

--from *Basic Bible Doctrines* by R.E. Harlow

Additional Verses

2 Thess. 3:6-15--keep aloof

1 Cor. 5 (2 Cor. 2)--not to associate

Tit. 2:11, 12--deny ungodliness

Heb. 12:6--whom the Lord loves He disciplines

1 Jn. 5:16, 17--sin leading to death

Matt. 18:15-20--reprove in private

Gal. 6:1--restore in gentleness

2 Cor. 13:1--testimony of two or three witnesses

1 Tim. 5:19--accusation against elder

12. Purpose

1Thess. 1:8

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

“Paul’s skill as a missionary is nowhere more marked than in his success as a church planter. As an effective evangelist hundreds came to know Christ through his preaching. He also excelled as a teacher and trainer of people. As a faithful parent trains his children so Paul brought to maturity his spiritual children. His crowning activity, however, was that he formed churches from the believers who had been evangelized and taught. The planting of churches was the third and final step in the strategy of Pauline mission (Acts 14:21-23)....Paul looked at the local church as a dynamic organism. Its life was that of Christ Himself. Its unity was maintained through His presence. Its direction and purpose were from Him. Paul expected to plant these organisms wherever he went with the gospel. He nurtured them with a view to growth both qualitatively and

quantitatively. He established them so they could thrive and grow in the cultural setting of the community. He encouraged them to reproduce themselves in the surrounding communities and, by extension, in distant places. Living organisms grow and reproduce if they are healthy. Paul viewed the churches in this way....He saw the church as an organism designed by God to function in accomplishing God's purposes. That function was in general to glorify God....In glorifying God the church, as Paul saw it, was to function in three directions. The first function was in relation to God, upward. The churches were gatherings of believers for worship....The second great function of the church as Paul viewed it was inward, toward its own members. They were to be built up in the faith, brought to maturity. They were to grow up. The risen Lord gave spiritual gifts such as teaching to people in the church to provide for its growth (Eph. 4:8-13)....Within this inward function there was room for admonition and discipline....Another side of the inner functioning of the church is that of fellowship or 'koinonia.' The local church functions so that its members share a common life. This is true in the spiritual life as well as in the social life. It even includes

financial sharing. Fellowship is that which binds the Christians together.

“The third great functioning of the church was outward toward the unbelieving world around them. Christ is building His church (Matt. 16:18). At the heart of what God is doing in this age is the fact that ‘He is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name’ (Acts 15:14). Paul taught that evangelism must be central in the function of the church. The church was not only the goal of evangelistic activity, it was the base for evangelism in the New Testament. To the Thessalonian church Paul said, ‘For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place’ (1 Thess. 1:8)...God designed it so that believers would be saved, then taught to grow to maturity, and finally gathered into a local church. From the strength of the local church fellowship they were to reach out, to evangelize, teach, and plant other local churches which would then repeat the process....When healthy churches function in this way, the result is the most efficient and satisfactory means of world evangelism. It is the key to world evangelism.” --from “Paul the Church Planter” by Kenneth Fleming