in Christ







Helping you take your **FIRST STEPS** to developing your ***relationship with God***

**COURSE 1**

Pastor Mike Thompson - Discipleship Resources

****

***“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.”* Eph. 2:19**

We are delighted you are interested in discovering more about God. This hunger for God is a treasure and will lead you to God’s plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

This course is designed to clearly communicate what is most essential to those seeking the new life in Christ. You will be introduced to some of the most essential beliefs and practices that will help establish your faith.

It is our prayer that this course will be a blessing to you, and source of glory for our Savior Jesus Christ.

****

# Table of Contents

****

**1** What does it mean to be a Christian? pg.

**2** A Deeper Dive pg.

**3** The Significance of Baptism pg.

**4** Communion pg.

**5** Your Relationship with God pg.

**6** Living Out Our God-Given Purpose pg.

**7** Personal Commitments pg.

# Lesson 1



## OUR PURPOSE

**1 |**

God made me to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Him!

**God says,** “I have loved you with an everlasting love!”  **Jeremiah 31:3**

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” **Ephesians 1:4-5**

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” **Ephesians 2:10**

**2 |**

We were created to be in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with God and to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God’s creation. **This makes us special!**

“So God created human beings making them in His image. He blessed them, and said…live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.” **Genesis 1:27- 28**

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who rightly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” **1 Timothy 6:17**

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!” **John 10:10**

**Living for God’s glory and purposes benefits our life and confidence:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Clear Conscience, Life & Peace** | Romans 8:1, Romans 8:6 |
| **Purpose, Confidence** | Romans 8:28, Romans 8:31 |
| **Power, Strength, & Fulfillment** | Philippians 4:13, Philippians 4:19 |
| **Help with Weakness/Security** | Romans 8:26, Romans 8:39 |
| **Freedom** | John 8:32, 26 |

## WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

**3 |**

Humans have a natural desire to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and to ignore God’s principles for living.

“Look out for #1. Do your own thing.”

 “If it feels good, do it – regardless of what God says about it.”

**4 |**

The Bible calls this attitude \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way: and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” **Isaiah 53:6**

 “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” **1 John 1:8**

**5 |**

Sin \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our relationship with God. It causes us to hide from God and live our lives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of His will.

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God.” **Isaiah 59:2**

 “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” **Romans 3:23**

## THE PROBLEM WITH OUR SIN

**6 |**

When our relationship with God is not right, it causes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in every area of our lives: marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

**7 |**

When people have problems, they often try many different ways of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ before turning to God.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” **Proverbs 16:25**

**Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try to fill the void in our life with things that can damage us:**

* Alcohol
* Drugs
* Ungodly sexual relationships
* Much more…

**Ineffective ways people try to reach God:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *“My mother was a Christian, so…”* | *“It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”* |
| *“I’ll give up all my bad habits.”* |
| *“I’ll work really hard and earn it.”* | *“I’ll be religious and go to church.”* |

**8 |**

These ways of reaching God are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because they are not what God wants.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” **Proverbs 14:12**

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” **Matthew 7:21**

## WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” **John 14:6**

God Himself came to earth as a human being to repair our relationship with Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way of repairing our relationship with God is a Person.

Jesus has already taken care of your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ problem.

**9 |**

“The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Romans 6:23**

God did this for us because He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us and wants us to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

**10 |**

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **Romans 5:8**

 “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” **1 Timothy 2:5**

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He calls us to receive what He has done for us. He calls us to live our lives for His glory and purposes rather than our own. In this we find our greatest joy and highest purpose.

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins.**

**1 |**

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” **1 John 1:9**

“Now when they heard (Peter’s sermon) they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” vs38 And peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” **Acts 2:37-38**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that he rose again and his alive today.**

**2 |**

“If you confess with your mouth that ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” **Romans 10:9**

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven (Jesus) given to men by which we must be saved.” **Acts 4:12**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God’s free gift of salvation. Don’t try to earn it.**

**3 |**

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Our relationship to God is restored based on what Jesus already did for us!

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director (“Lord”) of your life.**

**4 |**

“Yet to all who received him, those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, not of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” **John 1:12-13**

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in…” **Revelation 3:20**

## PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD

Salvation begins when God grants you the faith to believe Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, and Lord of you. This saving faith of God (along with the scriptures and the historical record) will activate your faith to believe that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died for your sins, and rose again, giving us the promise of eternal life through Him.

This saving faith involves the Spirit of God taking up residence in your entire being, giving you the ability to live for God and reject sinful impulses and patterns.

The following is an example of the type of prayer some people are led to pray as they are given saving faith of Jesus Christ. The primary instruction of scripture is that from our heart **we cry out to God asking Him to give us what we cannot give ourselves; forgiveness of sin, a new nature and a new life and purpose.**

### **Sample Prayer**

“Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored you and went my own way. I have lived for my own desires and ignored your will for my life. And I repent of my sins and I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand you and your word more. I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I receive your gift of salvation. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to grow as a Christian. I confess you are Lord of Heaven and Earth and Lord over me! Save me O God!”

“Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” **Romans 10:13**

# Lesson 2

This lesson is designed to provide a clear understanding of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. There was a time in church history in which no lay person had access to the word of God. At the same time the church began adding traditions and practices that were not in line with God’s word. The result was that the clear, biblical teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ was not being taught.

In the 14th through the 16th centuries God raised up several individuals who had a burning desire to translate the word of God into the common language of people so they could read the word for themselves. These “reformers” of the faith also articulated the biblical doctrine of saving faith in a series of short statements called the “Solas.” (Sola in Latin means “only”)

The following study of the “Solas” will help us clearly understand the doctrines of grace. And it will help us differentiate between the false doctrine of salvation by works, vs the true doctrine of salvation by grace through faith.

## THE FIVE SOLAS

### The Doctrines of Protestantism

Sola Gratia (Grace alone)

**1 |**

Salvation is the free gift of God to man. It is given by God’s Grace alone and not through any merit on the part of the Christian.

**GRACE** = **G**od’s **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense

“For by grace are you have been saved through faith, And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” **Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV).**

The importance of this doctrine in Protestant theology was underlined by Martin Luther, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians:

“If the Pope would concede that God alone by His grace through Christ justifies sinners, we would carry him in our arms, we would kiss his feet.”

Sola Fide (Faith alone)

**2 |**

We are judged righteous (holy) in the sight of God purely on the basis of our faith. The atoning sacrifice of Christ leads to righteousness being imputed (as if supernaturally injected into us) through a legal declaration by God. This is often stated as Justification by faith alone.

There is a clear distinction between Justification and Sanctification, Sanctification is the growth in holiness arising from the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian. God declares us holy (justification) and then through the ongoing work of the Spirit causes us to act more holy (sanctification)!

**FAITH** = **F**orsaking **A**ll **I** **T**rust **H**im

“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” **Galatians 3:11 (ESV)**

Commenting on Justification in his writings, Martin Luther argued that:

“This one and firm rock, which we call the doctrine of justification, is the chief article of the whole Christian doctrine, which comprehends the understanding of all godliness.”

Solus Christus (Christ alone)

**3 |**

Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and our salvation is accomplished only through His death and resurrection.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;” **1 Timothy 2:5 (KJV)**

In addition, every believer is a priest before God, with immediate access to him for the forgiveness of sins. This is known as the doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers. It was classically articulated by Martin Luther, but Protestants point to 1 Peter 2:9 as evidence of support for the doctrine:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” **1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)**

The doctrine is not unique to Protestantism, being also found in the Roman Catholic Church, for example, but Protestants insist that no other special form of Priesthood is necessary, as opposed to the Catholic view of a ministerial priesthood being required for the administration of the Sacraments and forgiveness of sins.

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone)

**4 |**

Scripture alone is the only infallible source of divine revelation and the final authority for matters of faith and practice. Sola Scriptura does not mean that all truth (such as medical knowledge and physics) is contained in the Bible, but rather, all mankind needs to know for salvation and the practice of the faith is contained within its pages.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)**

Protestants typically argue that scripture is perspicuous or clear to all people regarding the essential truths of the Christian gospel of salvation. In contrast to the Roman Catholic view of a Magisterium (or teaching office) of the church, which is required to infallibly interpret scripture; Protestants argue that through the Holy Spirit, individuals can, by themselves interpret the scriptures responsibly.

Soli Deo Gloria (To the glory of God alone)

**5 |**

Every aspect of the Christian life is to be seen as giving glory to God. In essence, this summarizes the other four Solas above. It also stemmed from the reformers opposition to what they perceived as the unwarranted glorification of the Popes and other clergy.

“Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” **1 Peter 4:11 (ESV)**

# Lesson 3


## WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

To follow the example set by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**1 |**

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” **Mark 1:9**

Because Christ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it.

**2 |**

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” **Matthew 28:19-20**

It testifies that I am a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**3 |**

“…many of the Corinthians who heard of him believed and were baptized.” **Acts 18:8**

We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands.” **1 John 2:3**

## WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

It illustrates Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and resurrection.

**4 |**

“…Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was raised on the third day according the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.” **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

It illustrates my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a Christian.

**5 |**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” **2 Corinthians 5:17**

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” **Romans 6:4**

Baptism does **NOT** make you a believer – it shows that you already believe. Baptism does not “save’ you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it’s the outward symbol of the commitment in your heart.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” **Ephesians 2:8-9**

## WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

**Note:** There is a clear distinction between infant dedication (which some call baptism) and believers’ baptism. This is explained in section five below.

Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was baptized that way.

**6 |**

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.” **Matthew 3:16**

Every baptism in the Bible was by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**7 |**

**(Examples)** “…Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water…” **Acts 8:38, 29**

The word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ means to be immersed in water.

**8 |**

**Note:** When there is not water available that is deep enough to be fully immersed an alternative to submersion might be pouring water over the head of the person seeking baptism. This was an alternative spelled out in the 2nd century new membership manual (Didache). God is interested in your act of faith expressed through baptism even if the ideal method is not available.

## WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

**9 |**

Every person who has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Christ.

“Those who accepted his message were baptized” **Acts 2:41**

“Simon himself believed and was baptized…” **Acts 8:13**

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.” **Acts 8:12**

If you are a new believer and have not been baptized by immersion since your salvation experience, then we encourage you to “do as Jesus Christ has done.”

## WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

When you believe in Jesus Christ for salvation!

“Those who accepted his message were baptized…that day.” **Acts 2:41**

“The eunuch asked Philip, ‘Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” **Acts 8:35-38**

## INFANT BAPTISM/DEDICATION

Many believers practice infant baptism (others call it baby dedication). The baptism or dedication of infants does not replace the need for adult baptism. Infant baptism comes from the voice of the parents and church family who receive (through baptism or dedication) the child into the fellowship, agreeing as a community to raise this precious child in the way of Christ.

Adult baptism comes from the heart and voice of the individual believer who affirms publicly they have received the faith for their own, and have surrendered their life to the will and glory of God

# Lesson 4


## IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNION

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth, but He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. The two ordinances are: Baptism and Communion. Communion is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

## WHAT IS COMMUNION?

### 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

It is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**1 |**

“…The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread…” **(v.23)**

It is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**2 |**

“…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.” **(v.24)**

It is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**3 |**

“In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’” **(v.25)**

It is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (or an act of preaching).

**4 |**

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” **(v.26)**

## WHO SHOULD TAKE COMMUNION?

**5 |**

Only those who are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (given themselves to Christ).

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” **Mark 14:22-25**

“For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.” **1 Corinthians 11:29**

## HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR COMMUNION?

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” **1 Corinthians 11:27-28**

### **Prepare yourself by:**

1. Self-Examination (1 Corinthians 11:28)
2. Confessing my sins (1 John 1:9)
3. Recommitment to Christ (Romans 12:1)
4. Restoring relationships (Matthew 5:23-24)

# Lesson 5

## INVESTING IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

It’s exciting to know that even though we are so far from perfect, God desires to have a personal relationship with each of us. This personal relationship with God causes us to be more like Jesus and transforms our thinking and daily living. As cars need gas, so we need to glorious presence and interaction with God to fuel up our lives with His glory and overcoming power. Here are three specific ways to build relationships with God.

Through Jesus

**1 |**

The Bible is crystal clear that God sent Jesus, so that anyone who has faith in Him can also know God and be adopted into God’s family now and in eternity.

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know Him and have seen Him!”’ **John 14:6-7**

Through Prayer

**2 |**

God cares about us, listens to us, and answers our prayers. We can actually grow closer to God by talking with Him every day. The Bible says,

“Don’t worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.” **Philippians 4:6**

The best part of connecting with God is that there are no special rituals or words needed. Just be yourself.

**Note:** Don't forget to listen in stillness to God allowing Him to speak deeply into your conscience and mind.

Through Applying What We Learn

**3 |**

According to the Bible, applying what we learn is proof that we love God.

“Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them.” **John 14:21**

Lesson 6

### Living Out Our God-Given Purpose as Followers of Jesus

The bible claims that proof that we are saved is seen in the way in which we follow and obey Him. Jesus calls us with these words; “Follow Me.” (Matthew 5:19). That is not always easy, but the more we follow Him the stronger we become in our faith.

We can take our next step in following Jesus by living out the five Biblical purposes that God has ordained for each Christian. The following acronym helps us remember our purposes: "What Every Christian Should Do". The first letter of each word in the phrase helps us remember the five purposes.

WORSHIP

**1 |**

We celebrate God’s greatness and enjoy His presence as we worship in a biblical focused vibrant church. Worship services are meant to inspire you to grow closer to God. That’s important because God tells us to “not neglect our meeting together.” (Hebrews 10:25)

EVANGELISM

**2 |**

Jesus and His first followers were committed to spreading the Gospel throughout the world (and starting new churches). Jesus tells us to do this in **Acts 1:8**:

“But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Each of us also has a personal responsibility to share our faith with our friends. The Bible says, “If someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it,” (1 Peter 3:15). Each of us can be prepared to tell a friend about their faith and excited to invite them to receive Christ and begin attending a church at which they can grow in their faith.

COMMUNITY

**3 |**

In Romans 12:5, Paul says, "Since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others." You and I were created by God to be in relationships. We need each other to encourage, support, challenge, and help each other grow as followers of Jesus.

SERVING

**4 |**

We are uniquely created by God to serve Him and make a difference in the world. He's given each of us a unique set of spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities and He wants to use them to impact other people's lives. God highlights this for us in **Ephesians 2:10**:

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

So, we invite everyone to serve in a “no-fail” atmosphere because we know that God loves seeing you serve.

DISCIPLESHIP

**5 |**

God desires that we continually grow in our faith, becoming more and more like Jesus in the way we think, speak and act so that we will experience the abundant life God created us to live.

Discipleship can begin at an early age. Jesus values kids. So we value kids. Jesus said in Luke 18:16 “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

True discipleship continues throughout our entire lives.

## TREATING PEOPLE LIKE JESUS TREATS PEOPLE

We believe that Jesus set the standard and is our model for how to love God and treat others. Here are some ways we can treat others like Jesus treats them:

By reaching up and reaching out

**6 |**

When Jesus was asked what commandment was most important, He replied:

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself." **Matthew 22:37-38**

By being real, relevant, and relational

**7 |**

Jesus was known by His first followers to be someone who truly cared for them. We attempt to model that by being real, relevant and relational. It’s our goal to “be real” by trying to live out what we say we believe. Our teaching is described as “relevant” because it addresses real-life issues and can be applied throughout the week. When it comes to being “relational”, Jesus invited everyone to follow Him and so do we. Come as you are!

**8 |**

By offering forgiveness, not judgement

God commands us to love others just as they are. We do that by meeting people where they are at on their own spiritual journey and walking with them as they take steps to grow closer to God.

The Bible says to, “Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32). This is a basic concept described in scripture, so we try to forgive each other like Jesus does.

The Bible is also very direct when it comes to judgment. It says, “Do not judge” (Matthew 7:1). Judgment is for God alone. Instead, our goal is to encourage and support each other and help each other grow closer to God.

By caring for our community

**9 |**

All people are important to God; therefore, they need to be important to us. The Bible says, “Don’t think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others too, and what they are doing.” (Philippians 2:4) That’s why churches reach out to their own community through Outdoor and sports ministries, AWANA, Family Care and Counseling, Clothing drives, benevolence programs, and various ways of expressing love to one’s neighbors and acquaintances.

# Lesson 6



The following is an example of the kind of commitments scripture calls us to make toward our home church, and to other believers.

## FELLOWSHIP RESPONSIBLITIES FOR BELIEVERS

**1 |**

I will protect the unity of this fellowship:

* By acting in love toward others
* By refusing to gossip, lie, or fault-find
* By making every attempt to follow the leaders

“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.” **Romans 14:19**

Have a sincere love for other believers; “love one another deeply from the heart.” **1 Peter 1:22**

“... do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate” **Titus 3:1-2**

· Deal with disagreements in person, face to face; “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you.” **Matthew 18:15**

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you.” **Hebrews 13:17**

I will share the responsibility of this fellowship:

**2 |**

* By praying for its message to be clearly proclaimed
* By inviting others to attend
* By warmly welcoming those who visit

**Paul requests prayer for their message to spread:**

“... And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ,...” **Colossians 4:2-5**

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” **Matthew 9:37-38**

“The Master said to the servant, Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full.” **Luke 14:23**

“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.” **Romans 15:7**

I will serve the ministry of this fellowship:

**3 |**

* By attending faithfully
* By living a godly life
* By prayerfully considering how God instructs me to spend my time, energy, and financial resources

“Let us not give up meeting together...but let us encourage one another.” **Hebrews 10:25**

“Whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.” **Phil 1:27**

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” **2 Corinthians 9:7**

### **Important Note on Commitments**

These commitments listed above are the actions that believers living by The Spirit will naturally desire and strive for as an expression of love for Jesus Christ.

## SHARING YOUR FAITH STORY

Briefly describe what your life was like before you decided to trust Christ, how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation, and how this decision has made a difference in your life.

Before Christ:

**1 |**

My salvation experience:

**2 |**

How my faith makes a daily difference:

**3 |**