



MY NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

***10 LESSONS ON HOW TO LIVE
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
A DISCIPLESHIP COURSE OF THE
APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Nazarean)***

MY NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

(Discipleship Course)

10 Lessons on How to Live the Christian Life

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WELCOME TO:

“MY NEW LIFE IN CHRIST”

The lessons of this course have been prepared with the purpose of helping you not only understand the wonderful meaning of "being IN CHRIST", but also, and more importantly, to live and enjoy this new life that Christ gave you. He said in John 10:10:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians said in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:
old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."**

It's very important for you to take these basic recommendations seriously in order for this course to fulfill its purpose:

- ◆ Be disciplined. Make it your goal to complete the course. Set aside a time for study and memorization on a daily basis.
- ◆ Take the advice and counsel of your discipleship leader very seriously. Be sincere with him/her.

Let's go! God bless you!

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INTRODUCTION

Being a Christian doesn't just consist in belonging to one of the branches of Christianity; it isn't just participating in Christian church services or practicing Christian ceremonies, prayers or singing Christian songs. Being a Christian consists in having Christ living in your heart after having received Him as your Lord and personal Savior. It is being "IN CHRIST". It is having a loving relationship with Him. To be a Christian is to love Christ, obey Him, adore Him and serve Him. To be a Christian is to live a CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE.

The Bible itself is CHRIST-CENTERED. As you read the Bible, you will prove to yourself that the main theme of it is the wonderful person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostles' preaching was CHRIST-CENTERED.

*"And daily in the temple, and in every house,
they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts 5:42)*

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:31)

The lives that the apostles lived were CHRIST-CENTERED lives:

"For to me to live is Christ..." (Philippians 1:21)

"... having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ..." (Philippians 1:23)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." (Galatians 2:20)

Because CHRIST is now your Lord and Savior, you are now an authentic Christian! You are now IN CHRIST, and you must learn to live your new life in Him.

Are you ready? Then let's start the first lesson.

LESSON 1: YOUR NEW POSITION IN CHRIST

Memory Verse:

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:
old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
2 Corinthians 5:17*

PRAISE GOD!

You have made the wisest and most important decision of your life, having received Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior. The Bible says that now you are a

NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST

and you've been given God's grace to live a

NEW LIFE!

But before continuing on with Biblical counsel as to how to live your new life, we want to teach you about your

NEW POSITION

that you have in God's sight because of the fact that you are **IN CHRIST**. That you believe in your position is of utmost importance for the development of your new life, being that the faith you have in your position is the foundation for living your new life **IN CHRIST**.

***Your faith in your position in Christ is the foundation for living your
NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.***

So pay attention to what follows!

What does being "IN CHRIST" really mean?

**To be "IN CHRIST" means PARTICIPATING
in all that Christ is and all that He has done.**

The Bible says that:

*"God... has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN CHRIST."
(Ephesians 1:3)*

Let's consider some of these incredible blessings that are yours because you are **IN CHRIST**:

WHAT YOU HAVE AND ARE IN CHRIST

IN CHRIST YOU WERE FORGIVEN

God has forgiven all of your sins; not only because He is a God of love and mercy, but above all, in virtue of the shed blood of Christ. The Bible says: *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins..."* (Ephesians 1:7) Read also 1 John 1:7, 9.

IN CHRIST YOU WERE JUSTIFIED

What does "justified" mean? It means to be declared **RIGHTEOUS**. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is perfectly righteous. He never sinned, and that's why He could die in our place. Because you are **IN CHRIST**, God gave you **HIS** righteousness. Now God sees you as if you've never sinned! The Bible says *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

IN CHRIST YOU WERE ACCEPTED BY GOD

You were accepted by God, **NOT** by your own merits, but by Christ's. Isn't the fact that God accepts you, that you are pleasing before his holiness a reason to rejoice? **CHRIST** made you an acceptable being. The Bible says: *"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."* (Ephesians 1:6)

IN CHRIST YOU WERE SANCTIFIED

What is your name? It doesn't matter what it is; if you are a man or a woman, add the title "**SAINT**" before your name. God gave you this new name. **HE** calls you "saint". Before God's eyes, each believer is a saint **IN CHRIST**. He doesn't wait until you pass away to make you a saint. "Holy" or "saint" means: separated from sin and dedicated to God. Although you are not perfect and sinless, your position **IN CHRIST** is holy. The Bible says: *"...to the **SAINTS** which are at Ephesus..."* (Ephesians 1:1)

IN CHRIST WE BECOME SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Since you gave your life to Christ, you have been the property of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, in a metaphorical sense, is like a seal that certifies the fact that you belong to God. Having been sealed by the Spirit guarantees your entrance in heaven. The Bible says: *"...in whom (Christ) also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."* (Ephesians 1:13)

IN CHRIST YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD

You, like every human being, were born in sin and dead spiritually. Yet when you were born again you were made a child of God! Read John 1:12-13. This passage says first of all how you DID NOT become a child of God:

"...*not of blood...*" Meaning, not by any human ties. One is not automatically a Christian because of having been born of Christian parents.

"...*nor of the will of the flesh...*" In other words, not by your own efforts. The Apostle Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 2:8-9 that it is "...*not by works*".

"...*nor of the will of man...*" means that it's not by the authority of a certain religious leader, nor church, or sacraments, etc.

"...**BUT OF GOD!**" You have been born again and therefore have been made a child of God because of **GOD'S WORK IN CHRIST!** (Galatians 4:6-7)

IN CHRIST YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

What will your eternal destiny be? ... heaven or hell? Without a doubt, you have been destined to eternally enjoy the glory of heaven! Read 1 John 5:11-13. Because you are IN CHRIST,

**YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD
YOU ARE SAVED
YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE**

Observing the verb "TO GIVE" in verse 11, we note that it is expressed in past tense. God "*HAS GIVEN*". Later verse 13 says "*YOU HAVE eternal life*" It's very simple: when you became a Christian, God gave you ETERNAL LIFE with Him, and that's why you HAVE ETERNAL LIFE! **KNOW IT! BELIEVE IT! PRAISE THE LORD FOR IT!** Never doubt your salvation; and if this ever happens, look up the following passages in the Bible, which will take all your doubts away:

1 John 5:11-13; John 5:24; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 8:15-17; 1 Peter 1:3-4

IN CHRIST YOU ARE COMPLETE

Did you know that? You are complete IN CHRIST. Something complete is something whole, something full or finished. The antonym of "complete" is "incomplete". No, the Bible does not say that you are "incomplete" in Christ. If it would say that, it would mean that you must seek for whatever is missing outside of Christ. But the Bible says: you are "*COMPLETE IN HIM*" (Colossians 2:8-10).

IN CHRIST, you have everything you need to live the Christian life that is pleasing to God.

Hold fast to this truth, and don't let anyone deceive you!

IN CHRIST YOU ARE PERFECT

Do you realize what your position is in God's holy eyes because of the fact that you are IN CHRIST? Your position is **perfect** (See Hebrews 10:14). Why? ... It's because of what **God has done for you IN CHRIST**.

Your condition is **imperfect**. IN CHRIST, you are **perfect**, but in and of yourself, you are imperfect. The way you talk, your behavior and your reactions in daily life show that you are **NOT perfect**. Isn't that so?

The Bible says: *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves..." (1 John 1:8)*. This and many other passages in the Bible teach us that even being IN CHRIST, we as believers live **imperfectly**.

We are **imperfect** because we still live in the flesh, but we must not serve it (Romans 6:6). Yet when we don't watch and pray as the Lord warned in Matthew 26:41, we will fall into sin.

Does this mean that we can be satisfied with our sins? NO! Because we have DIED TO SIN! That's why the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: *"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2)*

Although every authentic Christian does sin, yet he DOES NOT PRACTICE SIN HABITUALLY. This is what the Apostle John taught (Read 1 John 3:8-9), so that we see:

POSITION: **IN CHRIST, YOU ARE PERFECT**
CONDITION: **IN YOURSELF, YOU ARE IMPERFECT**

You don't need to do anything to better your position, because you are **perfect** (Hebrews 10:14). But there are things you must know to perfect your imperfect condition, since this is what God has called you to do.

You have taken the most important step of receiving Christ as your Lord and Saviour. You already are holy; you have eternal life; you have the best position IN CHRIST. But now, the will of God is that you live up to your position. How will you do that? The following lessons will teach you the steps that you must take to do just that.

LESSON 1: QUESTIONS

1. The foundation to living a new life IN CHRIST is your _____ in your _____ IN CHRIST.
2. "TO BE IN CHRIST" means _____ in all that Christ _____ and all that He _____.
3. In Ephesians 1:7, we read that IN CHRIST you have _____ of _____ through His blood.
4. Being justified IN CHRIST means that God sees you as if you _____; means that you are declared _____.
5. Can you be accepted by God on your own merits? _____. In whom were you accepted by God? _____.
6. Now that you have been sanctified IN CHRIST, what new title does God add to your name?

7. The word "holy" means: _____
8. What is the seal that guarantees that you belong to God? The _____.
9. In John 1:12-13 we read how you were NOT made a child of God. Let's remember that it's
 - * NOT by _____
 - * NOT by the _____ of the _____
 - * NOT by the _____ of _____.
10. Because of the work of God in _____, you were made a child of God, according to Galatians 4.6,7.
11. Write a Bible verse that assures you that you have eternal life:

12. What does "complete in Him" mean? _____

13. Your position in the holy eyes of God is _____ because of what He has done for you IN CHRIST.
14. Even though your position IN CHRIST is _____ your condition is _____.
1 John 1:8
15. If you are _____ to sin, although you sin, you don't _____ sin.

LESSON 2: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Memory Verse:

"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

John 15:5

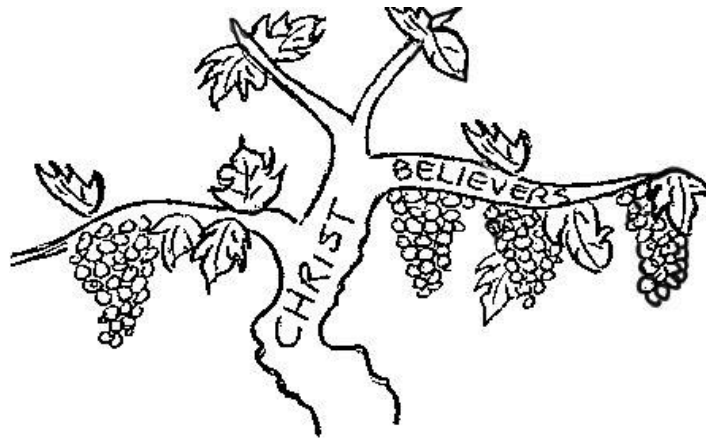
In our first lesson we learned about the wonderful meaning of being IN CHRIST: As we have seen, because of it, we have a new position before God. God sees us perfect IN CHRIST. But not only do we have a perfect position IN CHRIST, but also we have entered in a RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. This precious relationship can be expressed in two brief sentences: I AM IN CHRIST. CHRIST IS IN ME.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

To help us understand this new relationship between himself and us, the believers, the Lord Jesus used an illustration taken from nature. He said:

"I am the vine, ye are the branches." (John 15:5)

As we contemplate the vine and the branches, we see that they are united. They share the same life. The same sap that flows through the vine also flows through the branches.



This teaches us the wonderful truth that our union with Christ is a living union. Christ is THE LIFE, and when you believed in Him, God "grafted" you into THE LIFE.

Paul said:

"And you hath he quickened, [made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins". (Ephesians 2:1)

HIS DIVINE NATURE IS IN YOU

Since you became a Christian, **He shares His divine nature with you**. The Apostle Peter said that we are "*partakers of the divine nature*". (2 Peter 1:4)

YOU CAN LIVE UP TO YOUR POSITION

Do you realize why you can live up to your position IN CHRIST? Because Christ gives you His life; because the victorious Christ lives in you, and is in you to live His holy and victorious life. That is why:

- ◆ There is no sin that you cannot overcome
- ◆ There is no vice that you cannot forsake
- ◆ There is no temptation that you cannot be victorious in
- ◆ There is no Christian virtue that you cannot possess.

The Apostle Paul said:

"I can do ALL THINGS through CHRIST which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)

YOU MUST ABIDE IN CHRIST!

From verse 1 through verse 17 of John 15, Jesus uses the word "ABIDE" nine times. This is the way Jesus underlines the importance of **maintaining our communion with Him**. This is what "ABIDING IN HIM" means. It is the only way you can bear fruits of the new life. Jesus said:

*Abide in me... as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine;
no more can ye, except ye abide in me....because without me YE CAN DO NOTHING."*

John 15:4-5

If you separate yourself from Christ, **YOU WILL FAIL!**

If you abide in Him, **YOU WILL OVERCOME!**

The key is:

ABIDE IN CHRIST

DON'T WASTE TIME OR ENERGY!

Don't waste time or energy trying to produce fruits of your new life by yourself. It's useless: don't even try, because you cannot do it. Know and remember that you were not called to "produce" fruit, but rather to "bring forth fruit" (John 15:16). God is the one who produces fruit in you through Christ. In other words, don't force yourself to change and try to live as Christ lived. Rather trust in Him, perfect your relationship with Him each day, and you will see how His divine power will lead you to live your "NEW LIFE IN CHRIST."

LESSON 2: QUESTIONS

1. Your relationship with Christ can be expressed in the following two sentences:

I AM _____ .
CHRIST IS _____ .

2. The illustration of the vine and the branches that Jesus gave in John chapter 15 teaches us that your union with Christ is a _____ union.

3. Can you, as a believer, live up to your position IN CHRIST? _____ Why? Because Christ gives you His _____; the victorious Christ _____ to live His _____ and _____ life.

4. Is there any sin, vice or temptation that you cannot overcome if Christ is living in you? _____

5. What does "abide in Christ" mean?

6. Why must the believer abide in Christ?

7. Can you produce fruits of a new life by yourself? _____.

8. Who produces these fruits in you, and how are they produced?

LESSON 3: YOUR GROWTH IN CHRIST

Memory Verse:

*"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,
that ye may grow thereby."*

1 Peter 2:2

Continuing on with the course "MY NEW LIFE IN CHRIST, we'll now change the example, and hope that this will not confuse you. So far, we've seen two basic truths:

FIRST: What you are **IN CHRIST**.

SECOND: The relationship that you have **WITH CHRIST**, in which we used the example of the vine and the branches.

Now we will continue looking into your new life **IN CHRIST** and your relationship with Him, but using the example of a new born baby.

YOU HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN

The day that you fully surrendered your life to Christ making Him your Lord and Savior, you were made a child of God (John 1:12-13). That same day, you were born again! (See John 3:3.) Physically, you are the same, but spiritually, you are a new creature **IN CHRIST**. God regenerated you and adopted you as His child. That's why you can now call God "FATHER" (Galatians 4:6).

When a child is born, it automatically becomes not only another member of the human race, but also a member of a particular family. In the very moment that it is born, the child is recognized by its parents as their child. Days, months, or years don't have to go by for this to happen.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. A certain amount of time doesn't have to pass, nor do you have to do anything else to become a child of God, because you already are His child. Ten or twenty years from now, you won't be any more of a child of God than you are today; yet this new life must develop. In other words, you must grow spiritually.

BORN TO GROW

When a child is born, it is so small, so tender, so fragile! It needs so much special care and attention! Even though it is small, it is a potential man or woman; that child is complete, lacking nothing. It only needs to grow. Every child is born to grow. In the same manner, you have the potential to be a mature believer. You are **complete IN CHRIST**: you have been given all of the conditions to grow in the faith and become a mature believer **IN CHRIST**.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

To grow spiritually is to develop Christ's virtues in our life. In other words: **To grow spiritually is to be more like CHRIST each day.** The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians exhorts them: "... *grow up into him in all things...*" (Read Ephesians 4:13-16). We grow spiritually in the measure that we leave our sins and faults behind, replacing them with the virtues of our Lord Jesus.

CAN EVERYONE GROW SPIRITUALLY?

Yes, every child of God can and **MUST** grow spiritually. No child of God is born with a problem that would impede normal growth and development until that child reaches maturity, spiritually speaking.

HOW LONG DOES SPIRITUAL GROWTH TAKE?

Spiritual growth is a process that lasts a lifetime. Physically, we develop until a certain age, when we then begin to age; finally we pass away. On the other hand, in the Bible we are exhorted to continue growing more and more. Although believers may be mature physically, they can continue growing spiritually. The Apostle Paul said: "...*though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

WHAT MUST ONE DO TO GROW SPIRITUALLY?

To grow spiritually, you must be diligent in feeding the new man. Going back to the example of the vine and the branches, we saw that you must abide **IN CHRIST**; in other words, to be in communion with Him, to be able to live the new life.

Using the example of a child that must grow, it is necessary that you feed yourself spiritually.

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL FOOD?

THE SPIRITUAL FOOD IS JESUS CHRIST

Observe how Jesus himself presented himself to the world as the spiritual food when he said: "*Verily, verily I say unto you...! AM THAT BREAD OF LIFE...if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever...*" (Read John 6:32-58.)

The Apostle Paul said of Jesus: "*And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*" (1 Corinthians 10:3-4)

SPIRITUAL FOOD IS ALSO THE WORD OF GOD

Besides Jesus himself being spiritual food, the Bible, THE WORD OF GOD, is also spiritual food. The Apostle Peter, referring to the Word of God, wrote: *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."* (1 Peter 2:2)

The truth is that you feed on Christ each time that you "eat" His Word, the Bible. Each time you open the Bible and read it, it's as though you sit at the feet of the Master. One time when Jesus visited Martha and Mary, one of the sisters, Mary *"sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word."* (Luke 10:39) The Apostle Peter said to Jesus: *"Lord..., thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6:68) The disciples enjoyed each moment that they were with their Master. His words gave them life and power. His words transformed them. Jesus said: *"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."* (John 6:63)

Nearly 2000 years have passed since Jesus returned to heaven. Since then, no one has seen him or heard His voice; yet He left us HIS WRITTEN WORD, which feeds and cleanses us day by day. It is all you need to grow in faith and live the abundant life. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

That's why we encourage you to begin to take of the milk of the Word every day. In the next lesson, you will learn very important things about the Word of God, and most importantly, about how to feed yourself from it.

LESSON 3: QUESTIONS

1. According to the following scripture verses, what happened to you the day you received Christ as your Lord and Savior?

John 1:12-13 _____

John 3:3 _____

2. You already ARE a child of God. What must you do now? _____

3. Explain the meaning of "complete in Christ."

4. What does "spiritual growth" mean?

5. We grow spiritually in the measure that we leave our _____ and _____ behind and we replace them for the _____ of our Lord Jesus.

6. Spiritual growth is a process. How long does it take? _____

7. To grow spiritually, the believer must be diligent in _____ the new man, meaning that he must _____ in Christ and be in communion with Him.

8. The two spiritual foods we studied are: _____ and _____.

9. Which verse teaches us that the Word of God is sufficient for you to grow in faith and live the abundant life? _____.

LESSON 4: THE WORD OF GOD

Memory Verse:

*"...Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

Matthew 4.4

INTRODUCTION

We have already seen that your spiritual life and growth depend on if you feed yourself with the Word of God or not. To feed yourself with the Word of God, you must do five things with it: read it, hear it, study it, memorize it, and above all, obey it.

In Revelations 1:3 we read: *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."*

You can read the Word of God; you can hear it; you can study it and memorize it, and obtain great biblical knowledge with time. Yet if you do not keep, or **obey it**, it will be worth NOTHING to you. God has left us His Word so that we obey it. Jesus said: *"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."* (Luke 11:28)

HOW TO READ AND OBEY THE BIBLE

(DEVOTIONS)

You can read the Bible at any time, in any circumstance and place, and it will be good for you. Yet, it is very important that you make it a habit of setting aside a special time each day to meet with God. This time of Bible reading, meditation and prayer is generally called "devotions". This is what we will be talking about now, being that it is the first thing that you must start to do and must practice for the rest of your life if your true desire is to grow spiritually and remain strong in the faith.

These are the steps to practice "devotions":

1. **SET ASIDE A TIME DAILY.** God is available 24 hours a day. This means that we can have "devotions" any time of the day. Nonetheless, experience teaches us that there's no better time for an encounter with God than early in the morning. (Mark 1:35; Psalm 63:1)
2. **FIND A QUIET PLACE.** (Mark 1:35) The place isn't important; what is important is that it be a place that is quiet enough to be able to concentrate on the Word of God.
3. **HAVE A BIBLE AND NOTEBOOK** on hand to take notes.
4. **FOLLOW A METHOD.** We offer a simple and useful method for you to use in your "devotions". It consists of five steps: pray, read, meditate, take notes, and pray.

First: PRAY

Before you open your Bible, say a short prayer thanking God for the new day, and for the opportunity that you have to meet Him. Ask that His Holy Spirit teach you and speak to you through His Word.

Second: READ

Read a section of the Scriptures several times. If you don't understand the meaning of a word, look it up in the dictionary.

Third: MEDITATE

Meditating on what you've read will help you discover God's message to you so that you can apply it to your life. When you meditate on His Word, consider what God is saying to you:

1. Reasons to thank/praise God.
2. Sins you must confess and give up.
3. Promises you must claim.
4. Commandments you must obey.
5. Examples that are worthy of imitating or avoiding.
6. Truths you must believe.
7. Virtues you must grow in.
8. Thoughts about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.

Fourth: TAKE NOTES

As you discover important things, take note of them in your notebook.

Fifth: PRAY

As you finish, pray, thanking the Lord for what He has taught you, and ask Him to help you obey what you learned in His Word.

MODEL FOR DEVOTIONS

DATE: Tuesday, March 10, 2009 **TEXT:** Colossians 3:12-14

COMMANDMENT: I must put on the Christian virtues of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. (v. 12)

COMMANDMENT: I must put up with others, and forgive as Christ forgave me.

COMMANDMENT: The most important virtue I must acquire is love. Love is what ties it all together, the bond of perfectness.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: It's hard for me to forgive. I realize that my lack of love is what makes it difficult for me to forgive.

PRAYER: "Heavenly Father, I thank you for having spoken to me this morning. Lord, I realize that I don't forgive others as Christ forgave me. Lord, I ask you to forgive me and fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I can love and forgive others as I should. Lord, I specially ask you to intervene in the problem I have with Bro. Andrew, because what he did really hurt me, but he is my brother, and I must forgive him. Father, in your presence I forgive him, and today I will go see him to get this straightened out. Lord, I need your help to take this step, which is hard for me to do. Thank you because I know you will help me. In Jesus Name, Amen."

Do you realize what the purpose of having devotions is? It's not only to discover what the passage of the day means, but to understand the message of God for your life so that you can apply it to your daily living and be more Christ-like each day.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE

DEVELOP THE HABIT OF DOING YOUR DEVOTIONS

A habit is a continuous and frequent inclination to do a certain activity, acquired by frequent repetition. It generally takes about four weeks to get used to something new. After another four weeks, it will become a habit.

GET UP EARLIER

To be able to have your devotional time, you must get up earlier. This means going to bed earlier. **DO IT!** Discipline yourself. **IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT!**

READ SYSTEMATICALLY

Don't just read anywhere. It's better to be systematic in your Bible reading. Some Christians are used to reading here and there. They open the Bible and read whatever is on that particular page. Although this is better than nothing, we don't recommend it, because it can confuse you or cause wrong interpretations because of not understanding the context. That's why we advise you to start with one book and read through it until you finish it.

DON'T WORRY...

When you read something and don't understand it. In the beginning there will be a lot of things in the Bible that you don't understand. When this happens, continue to read the following verses until you find God's message for you.

DON'T FEEL GUILTY...

As if you had sinned, if you couldn't do your devotions one day because of a special circumstance. Without a doubt, you will feel as though something is missing. At any rate, don't consider it a sin, and as soon as possible, get into the routine of doing your devotions normally once again.

HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Another important habit that you must develop is the habit of hearing the Word of God. The will of God is that you go to church to hear His Word. The bible says that God has placed pastors and teachers in the church to teach us The Word. (Read Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24-25).

Even though your personal time in reading and meditating on the Word are fundamental in your spiritual development, **DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF HEARING THE WORD OF GOD**, since God himself has established this as another way to build you up spiritually. You must know that there are certain things that God will teach you only through sermons and Bible studies given by pastors, teachers and preachers. (See Ezra 8.)

Attend all the church meetings you can. Don't underestimate the value of them. Go to church to hear the Word of God. Don't look at who is teaching it, but rather in what God wants to tell you through His servant.

STUDY THE WORD OF GOD

There is nothing as fascinating as studying the Bible. In later studies, we will teach you how to do it and will provide the material you need to do so.

Serious, deep study of the Word of God will not only enrich your faith, but it will also prepare you to present solid and convincing arguments to unbelievers and/or to refute scoffers, as well as to preach or teach it in the event that you are called by God into a particular ministry.

(Read 2 Timothy 2:1; Titus 1:9; Jude 22; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.)

In the meantime, continue with this course and acquire the habits of doing your devotions and attending church services. You are now in the first stage of your Christian life, the stage of "milk". Later on you will be prepared to receive solid food (Hebrews 5:11-14).

MEMORIZE THE WORD OF GOD

This is another very important habit that you must acquire. You should memorize at least one Bible verse each week.

BENEFITS OF MEMORIZING THE WORD OF GOD

1. **It will help you in times of trials and temptations.** Notice how Jesus used certain Scripture texts (obviously memorized) when he was tempted in the desert. (Read Matthew 4:4,7,10)
2. **It will help you defend The Truth.** There will be times when you will be encountered by false prophets that will recite Bible verses to confuse you. At these times, you will use the arrows you have in your quiver to refute the false arguments of the deceivers. (Read Matthew 4:1-11)
3. **It will make you be sure of yourself as you witness.** (1 Peter 3:15)
4. **It will give you encouragement when you are down or under pressure.** (Jeremiah 15:16)

HOW TO MEMORIZE A VERSE

FIRST: Choose a verse that you like.

SECOND: Say the book, chapter and verse before and after the text.

THIRD: Read the verse aloud several times.

FOURTH: Divide the verse in short phrases.

EXAMPLE: 2 Corinthians 5:17:

REPEAT ONLY THIS SEVERAL TIMES: —————> "Therefore if any man be in Christ"

THEN THIS: —————> "he is a new creature"

AND THIS: —————> "old things are passed away:"

AND THIS: —————> "behold, all things are become new."

FIFTH: Write the verse you memorized on a card or in a small notebook and take it wherever you go to review it.

SIXTH: **REVIEW, REVIEW, REVIEW!** The secret to remembering a verse you already memorized is in reviewing it. Go over the memorized verse several times a day, during at least a week, then once a month. This is the way to keep it in your memory.

RESULTS OF READING, HEARING, MEMORIZING, STUDYING, AND OBEYING THE WORD

1. It will give you the assurance of your salvation. (1 John 5:13)
2. It will give you confidence in prayer. (John 15:7)
3. It will cleanse you from sin. (John 15:3; Psalm 119:9)
4. It will give you joy. (John 15:11; Jeremiah 15:16)
5. It will give you peace. (John 16:33; Colossians 3:15; Psalm 119:165)
6. It will guide you in your decision making. (Psalm 119:105)
7. It will prepare you to witness. (1 Peter 3:15)
8. It will guarantee you success according to God's standards. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3)
9. It will make you a strong, victorious Christian. (1 John 2:14)
10. It will sanctify you. (John 17:17)

LESSON 4: QUESTIONS

1. What are the five things you must do with the Word of God?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

2. God gave us His Word so that we _____ it.

3. What is a daily time of prayer, reading and meditating on the Word called? _____

4. When is the best time of the day to meet with God? _____

5. To have a "devotional time", you should follow these steps:
Set aside _____.
Find _____.
Have a _____ and a _____ on hand.
Follow a _____.

6. The method to be followed has 5 steps. They are:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

7. What is the purpose of having personal devotions? _____

8. God has established another way to build you up spiritually, besides reading the Word privately.
What is the other way? _____

9. Why is it important to study the Word of God? _____

10. Name four benefits of memorizing the Word:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

11. In your own words, explain the results of reading, hearing, memorizing, studying and obeying the Scriptures in your life. _____

LESSON 5: PRAYER

Memory Verse:

*"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication
with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."*

Philippians 4:6

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is communicating with God. To pray is to direct ourselves to God, expressing our feelings and needs to Him. In reading the Bible, God speaks to you; as you pray, you speak to God.

WHY PRAY?

Because it is God's will. God knows everything perfectly, including all that is happening to you and all that you need, without it even being necessary for you to tell Him; yet **He has determined to act in response to prayer**. The reason we must pray is because God wants you to learn to depend on Him; He wants you to be aware of your dependence on Him each time you pray and each time He answers. (Matthew 6:9; Philippians 4:6)

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

The Bible says: "*praying always*" (Ephesians 6:18). God is available 24 hours a day. His ears are always open unto our prayers. (1 Peter 3:12) Even though you can pray any time of the day, get in the habit of setting aside a special time for prayer each day, as we saw in the last lesson. (Psalm 63:1-3; Mark 1:35)

WHERE SHOULD WE PRAY?

The Bible says: "*I will therefore that men pray every where...*" (1 Timothy 2:8). You don't need to go to a certain place to pray, since God is present everywhere. For this reason, ANY WHERE is an appropriate place to pray.

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE PRAY?

The more you pray, ALL THE BETTER! The Jewish people had the habit of praying three times a day. Moslems pray five times a day. The Bible does not specify how many times we should pray each day, but it exhorts us to "*PRAY WITHOUT CEASING*" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and to "*CONTINUE IN PRAYER*" (Colossians 4:2). Make it a habit of praying several times a day, but also learn to live with a prayerful attitude at all times, even when you are busy.

WHAT SHOULD WE ASK FOR?

Pray about everything and for everyone. **The Bible says:** *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."* (Philippians 4:6-7) You can ask God for big things and for small things. Ask Him for your personal physical, material, emotional, spiritual needs as well as those of your family. Pray for your friends, neighbors, co-workers, church leaders, government officials, etc. (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Pray to God for everything, trusting that He hears you each time you pray according to His will.

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

CONDITIONS TO BE HEARD

1. There should be no unconfessed sin in your life. (Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18; Lamentations 3:42-44)
2. You must not have any resentment or grudges against anyone. (Mark 11:24-25)
3. You must be at peace with your family. (1 Peter 3:7)
4. You must ask according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15). Here it says that *"we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him"*, but there is also a condition: *"ACCORDING TO HIS WILL"*. Now, how can you know what God's will is? By reading His Word! (See Ephesians 5:17.) The better you know God's Word, the better you will know God, and His will. This way you will know what to ask for and what NOT to ask for. If you happen to be in a situation that you don't know how to ask, trust in the intercession of the Holy Spirit. (Read Romans 8:26-27.)

TECHNIQUES IN PRAYER

Each time you pray, do so TO THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF JESUS (John 14:13-14). You can start your prayer saying: "Heavenly Father", "Holy Father" or "Lord", and finish your prayer with the words "In Jesus' name". To pray in Jesus' name means that you realize that you have access to God (the Father), thanks to the merits of Christ (the Son). It also means that you pray with the authority of Christ and according to His desires.

Pray with reverence. Although God is your Father and your Friend, remember that He is KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS; the SOVEREIGN of the universe; the HOLY GOD, the ALMIGHTY, in whose presence the seraphim cover their faces and feet to show their unworthiness to be in the presence of the All Holy God. (Read Isaiah 6:1-3.) Therefore, draw near to God your Heavenly Father with all confidence and joy, but also with a humble attitude and reverential fear.

Avoid the use of crutches. A crutch is a word or phrase that a person repeats out of habit in a conversation or prayer. EXAMPLE: "Lord, thanks for this day Lord, I ask you, Lord to bless me Lord, and also Lord...."

Pray out loud. Each time that you can, pray out loud. NOT so that God can hear you, because He even knows your thoughts, but so that you can be more concentrated on what you are praying.

CONTENTS OF PRAYER

A complete prayer is basically made up of five parts:

PRAISE – WORSHIP
THANKSGIVING
CONFESSION OF SIN
INTERCESSION
PERSONAL PETITIONS

MODEL PRAYER

1. **PRAISE - WORSHIP:** "Heavenly Father, I praise you because you are wonderful and your mercy is everlasting." (Psalm 106:1)
2. **THANKSGIVING:** "Thank you; Lord, thank you so much for having saved me and for having given me a new and victorious life in Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57)
3. **CONFESSION:** "Father, I ask that you forgive me for having offended my brother." (1 John 1:19)
4. **INTERCESSION:** "Lord, I ask that you give Bro. John the strength that he needs during this time of trial that he is going through; that he be perfected, and you be glorified through it." (Luke 22:31-32)
5. **PERSONAL PETITIONS:** "Heavenly Father, you know that I lost my job. I ask you to give me one. I know that all things are possible for you. I'm waiting on you. Lord, I ask that you sanctify my and fill me with your Holy Spirit. I want to honor you with my lips and with my life. Use me to edify my brothers and sisters, and to win souls for you. In Jesus name, Amen!"

PRIVATE PRAYER

Practice private prayer. Remember that Jesus went to pray alone, and do it also each day.

Use a prayer list. When you go to the supermarket, you take a list along where you have written down everything you need. Why? So you don't forget anything. In the same way, preparing a list with different prayer needs will help you not to forget to pray for important things, as many times happens.

For this reason, it's good to have a small notebook and write down prayer needs, distributing them throughout the seven days of the week.

MODEL PRAYER LIST

MONDAY:

1. Brothers and sisters: Smith family, Jones family
2. Non-Christians: Joseph, Kimberly
3. Church: The Elders & Ministers / Pastor
4. Personal: A job; to overcome my gossiping (or other sin/s)
5. Others: For the government

You can follow this model or come up with your own, but make it a habit of praying with a list every day. This way your prayers will be more specific and efficient.

PUBLIC PRAYERS

1. **PRAY OUT LOUD.** Each time you pray in public, especially in a large room and with many people, pray loud enough to be heard. You must pray loud enough so that when you finish with "amen", the rest can support that "amen."
2. **DIRECT YOUR PRAYER TO GOD, AND NOT TO OTHERS.** Never use public prayers to preach to others. Don't use your prayer to give indirect messages to those who hear it. Each time you pray in public, forget about others, and pray to God.
3. **DON'T PRAY ELABORATE PRAYERS** to impress those who are listening. When you pray in public, use simple words. (Matthew 6:5)
4. **AVOID LONG PRAYERS.** Public prayers should be specific and brief. Save your long prayers to pray in private.

HOW GOD ANSWERS

Be sure that each time you pray to God with a clean heart, **HE HEARS YOU** (1 Peter 3:12). On the other hand, you must know that even though God **ALWAYS** hears you, there are three possible ways He will respond: with a **YES** with a **NO**, or with a **NOT YET**.

Naturally, we all want God to grant us **EVERYTHING** that we ask for, and that He do so **IMMEDIATELY**. But even though God is **TOTALLY LOVING, TOTALLY GOOD, AND TOTALLY MERCIFUL**, He is also **ABSOLUTELY WISE AND SOVEREIGN**. At times He does not give us what we ask Him for, or He doesn't do it when or how we would like. But there are also many times that He responds us immediately, and sometimes in surprising ways, giving us *"abundantly above all that we ask or think."* (Ephesians 3:20)

THREE WAYS GOD ANSWERS:

- WITH A "YES": (1 Chronicles 4:10)
- WITH A "NO": (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)
- WITH A "NOT YET": (Psalm 40:1)

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Make prayer a priority in your life. Pray at all times, in all places, and in every circumstance. Pray with faith. Pray with perseverance. Pray fervently. Pray for the church, for the ministers, for the fellow believers, for your family, for the salvation of the lost, for yourself, for your spiritual maturity. Pray in private and pray with others!

ATTEND PRAYER MEETINGS!

Remember that although God CAN do all things, even though we don't ask Him, He has established that He will act according to HOW and HOW MUCH we pray! The Lord says:

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." (Jeremiah 33:3)

MAKE PRAYER A PRIORITY!
YOUR PRAYERS ARE IMPORTANT!
(James 5:16-18)

LESSON 5: QUESTIONS

1. Explain what prayer is, in your own words: _____

2. The will of God is that the believer pray. He wants you to learn to _____ on Him.
3. What promise can we find in 1 Peter 3:12 regarding prayer? _____

4. Why don't you need to go to a specific place to pray? _____
5. "Pray without ceasing" means to live with a _____ at all times.
6. We must pray about _____ and for _____.
7. In order for God to hear you, you must not have any _____ you've not confessed, nor _____ in your heart, and you must be at _____ with everyone.
8. You must ask according to the _____ of God. How can you know God's will?

9. Who should your prayer be directed to? _____
10. What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name? _____

11. You must approach God with confidence and joy, but also with _____

12. What are the five basic parts of a prayer? 1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
13. Why is it important to use a prayer list? _____
14. What are some things to remember when praying in public? _____

15. Three ways God answers prayer are: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
16. Explain in your own words why you should make prayer a priority in your life. _____

"CALL ON ME AND I WILL ANSWER THEE, AND SHEW THEE GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS, WHICH THOU KNOWEST NOT." Jeremiah 33:3

LESSON 6: SANCTIFICATION

Memory Verse:

*"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:
but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye also holy in all manner of conversation;
because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
1 Peter 1:14-16*

INTRODUCTION

Since the day that you have been converted you have been saved and have a perfect position in Christ before God. Something else has happened since your conversion: you have begun to experience changes in your way of living. What things can you say have changed in your life?

You are changing! You must keep on changing! That is what this lesson is about: your sanctification.

WHAT DOES SANCTIFICATION MEAN?

Sanctification consists in separating oneself from sin and dedicating oneself to God. The result of this process is a holy life, a life full of holiness. Sanctification is, then, the perfecting of a holy life. In other words:

SANCTIFICATION IS THE MEANS GOD USES TO FORM YOUR
CHARACTER AND CONDUCT IN THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

In being justified, man is declared righteous by God, as we have seen. Therefore, justification is something God does in your favor. Sanctification, on the other hand, is something that God does in you, in your own being. To put it in other words:

JUSTIFICATION PLACES YOU IN A CORRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD,
WHILE SANCTIFICATION SHOWS THE FRUIT OF THAT BLESSED RELATIONSHIP.

Remember the analogy of the vine and the branches? Because you have received Christ, you have been "grafted" to the vine; and now that you are in Him, you must bring forth fruit.

This fruit is manifested by two things:

SEPARATION FROM SIN
DEDICATION TO GOD.

Let's look at some biblical examples of these two faces of sanctification.

SEPARATION FROM SIN

(Read 2 Chronicles 28 and 29)

When Hezekiah began to reign as king of Judah, the temple of the Lord had been completely abandoned. The former king, Ahaz, was an idolatrous and wicked king. Because of his idolatry, Ahaz provoked God's wrath, since he had also closed the doors of the temple and broken the vessels of the house of God, which were consecrated for worshiping the Lord. To top off his wickedness, he had built altars in all the corners of Jerusalem, and in all the cities of Judah to burn incense unto other gods. The people, following the king's example, lived very wicked lives.

The first thing the Hezekiah did was to open the doors of the house of the Lord, so that the people could worship God once again. Having called in the priests and Levites (religious leaders), he said to them: *"Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place."* (2 Chronicles 29:5)

"And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord. And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron. Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord: so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end. Then they went in to Hezekiah the king and said, We have cleansed all the house of the Lord, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof. Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the Lord." (2 Chronicles 29:15-19)

Here we can clearly see that the word "sanctify" is used to mean cleanse from evil or filth - first through the purification of the Levites themselves; and later, through the purification of the house of the Lord.

DEDICATION TO GOD

(Read Romans 6:17-22)

Separating oneself from sin and evil is one side of sanctification. The other side is the dedication or consecration to the Lord's service. Paul is very clear and practical in Romans 6:19, teaching us that as we used our bodies to serve sin before knowing the Lord, now that we have separated ourselves from it, we must consecrate our members to the Lord's service.

YOU MUST GROW IN HOLINESS

Since the day you accepted the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you became a saint, and sanctified at the same time. (Read 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 1:7.)

God does not wait until a believer passes away to call him "saint", but rather in the same moment he is born again, he is declared holy, and that is only by pure grace and through the working of the Holy Spirit. Yet being born again is only the beginning of our sanctification. Remember what we saw about the example of a new-born baby? A newborn, although so small, is **complete**; nothing is lacking. He simply **has to grow**. Growth is a process that takes time. In the same way, you must grow, not to become holy, but to **grow in holiness**.

HOW DOES SANCTIFICATION TAKE PLACE?

Sanctification doesn't happen overnight. In fact, it is a process that begins with our new birth and ends when we pass away, or when the Lord comes. It is a continuous process.

1. **THE DIVINE ASPECT:** Sanctification is a divine work. Just like the three persons of the trinity intervene in salvation, they also work together in our sanctification. (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrew 10:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:17-22; Romans 8:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18.)
2. **THE HUMAN ASPECT:** Although it is God that does the work of sanctification in our life, this is produced only with our cooperation in our assuming an attitude of faith in our position in Christ, and complete obedience to his demands.

THE FOUNDATION: FAITH IN YOUR POSITION

In the first place, your sanctification depends on your faith in your position in Christ. This is the foundation of the abundant Christian life, and the foundation of sanctification. Remember what we learned in the first lesson? There we considered the wonderful meaning of BEING IN CHRIST.

BEING IN CHRIST MEANS PARTICIPATING IN ALL THAT CHRIST IS AND DID.

In the first lesson, we saw what you ARE and/or RECEIVED because of the fact that you are IN CHRIST: Now we will consider two more aspects of your position IN CHRIST which have a direct relationship with your sanctification and are very important. The passage we will use is Romans 6. (Read it!)

ROMANS CHAPTER 6 PRESENTS TWO BASIC FACTS:

1. YOU ARE DEAD TO SIN.
2. YOU ARE ALIVE UNTO GOD.

If you believe these two truths with all of your heart, and act according to the Apostle Paul's advice, you will sanctify yourself, and will be able to effectively serve God.

FIVE STEPS TO SANCTIFICATION

FIRST STEP: "KNOWING" (Romans 6:6)

Note that Paul doesn't say: "feeling this", or "thinking this", or "experiencing this", but rather "KNOWING THIS". Just what is it that you must know? ...that your old man is crucified with Christ! Who is the "old man"? The "old man" refers to man in his natural, unregenerated state, which lives subject to the innate power of sin. **Your "old man" is who you were before you knew Christ.**

Paul emphatically teaches that your "old man" was **crucified with Christ**. You must know that! Christ not only carried your sins on the cross, but he carried you also. So through the cross of Christ you not only received forgiveness from your sins, (that which you did), but also freedom from what you are. Both are **divine facts**: that Christ has died for you is a fact. But it is also a fact that **YOU DIED WITH HIM**. Why? **SO THAT YOU SERVE SIN NO MORE!**

EXAMPLE: THE SOLDIER WHO FINISHED HIS TERM

What would you do if you were a soldier, who finished his term, and you met the man who was your Commanding Officer and he shouted an order to you? When a soldier finishes his term of duty, he is not obligated to obey his Officer anymore! The same thing happened to you. **IN CHRIST YOU HAVE BEEN FREED FROM THE AUTHORITY OF SIN AND SATAN!** You aren't obligated to obey them anymore, To do that, you must...

SECOND STEP: CONSIDER YOURSELF DEAD TO SIN. (Romans 6:11)

Because you are **IN CHRIST**, **you are dead to sin**. Therefore, **consider yourself dead to sin**, in spite of what you think, feel or experience. If you don't consider yourself dead to sin, it's very difficult to obtain victory over it. On the other hand, if you **BELIEVE GOD**, if you accept these divine facts by faith, you will live up to your position!

EXAMPLE: TRUTH, FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

"Truth, Faith and Experience were walking on a wall. Truth was marching along with a firm step in front of the others, without looking to either side, and never looking back. Faith followed, and all was going well while she had her eyes fixed on Truth. But as soon as she became worried about Experience and turned around to see how she was, Faith lost her balance and fell off the wall, taking Experience with her."

Don't look at yourself; rather, keep your focus on The Truth of God; on the divine facts in your favor. Learn to live by faith. Learn to believe God. If God says you are dead to sin and alive unto Him, believe Him, praise Him, and **consider yourself dead to sin and alive unto God**. This will lead you to sanctification.

THIRD STEP: DON'T OBEY SIN (Romans 6:12-13)

The Apostle Paul says not to let sin "reign." Remember that sin is still the king. Sin continues to have power and authority, BUT NOT OVER YOU!

The apostle's expression, said in other words and going back to the example of the soldier who finished his term, could be: "Don't submit to the Officers orders, because he isn't your Officer any more. Don't obey him, because you aren't under his authority."

Even though Satan approaches you (and he always will do so) with a thousand temptations and orders, don't obey him! Tell him NO! You are not obligated to sin because you are IN CHRIST. Believe this and put it into practice. You'll see that it works!

FORTH STEP: DON'T YIELD TO SIN (Romans 6:13, 19)

What a fatal combination, when sin orders you and you not only obey, but you voluntarily yield! Don't yield! Don't offer yourself to sin. On this point we want to give some practical advice:

1. Don't feed the desires of the flesh. (Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:22-24)
2. Avoid bad company. (Psalm 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 5:7)
3. Avoid people, things and places that would entice you to sin. (Matthew 5:27-30)
4. Don't give the devil any room. (Ephesians 4:27)

FIFTH STEP: YIELD TO GOD (Romans 6:13, 19)

As we are learning, sanctification has two sides: one is leaving sin, and the other is consecrating oneself to God. We can say it another way: you were saved from sin to serve God. You have died to sin and have been born again IN CHRIST with the purpose of living for God. Today, all of your being belongs to God. (Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.) Your spirit, soul, and body: eyes, hands, tongue. All that you are and have belongs to the Lord. Therefore, your consecration to God is your "reasonable service," meaning that service to Him who is your Owner is logical and natural (Romans 12:1).

EXAMPLE: SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY

If you have \$50 in your pocket that is yours, then you can spend it on whatever you please. But if this money belongs to a different owner, someone else who gave it to you to take care of, then you can't use it for whatever you want. You just don't have the right to do so.

This is like your life since you received Christ. God is now your owner, and you are His servant. You can't use your spirit, soul, or body for whatever you want. Serve your Lord!

ACTIVELY DEDICATE YOURSELF TO DOING GOOD

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 12:9: "*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*" Now that you are IN CHRIST, you must not only avoid evil, but you must use your members, your talents, your resources, your energy and your time to do "*that which is good.*"

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Use your time wisely, especially your free time. Take advantage of this time to study and memorize the Scriptures. Set aside time to visit the sick, visit friends, family, acquaintances or even people you don't know to share the Gospel. Visit your fellow Christians and share a word of hope, love and encouragement with them. Meet to pray with a group of believers weekly. Offer yourself to the leaders of the church to do whatever needs to be done in the church. Be willing to do every good work. (2 Timothy 2:21)

*"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
(Ephesians 5:15-16)*

Daily and actively dedicate yourself to serving the Lord. This will bring tremendous joy to your life. You will see how God uses you in His purposes! You will also be avoiding many temptations and falls that overcome the negligent Christian.

HOW HOLY DO YOU WANT TO BE

You are holy IN CHRIST. Your entire being belongs to God, who calls you to be holy. The Holy Spirit is in you to sanctify you more and more (with your cooperation) so that you become more like Christ every day. Now the question is:

HOW HOLY DO YOU WANT TO BE?

You will be as holy as you want. Just as God did not force you to accept Christ, neither will He force you to sanctify yourself: Although God is your Lord, He wants you to love Him and serve Him sincerely. That's why we read in Romans 12:1:

*"I beseech you... by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*

DISCIPLINE AND TRIALS SANCTIFY

In order that you grow in holiness to the stature of Christ, there will be occasions when you need be disciplined by God and subject to diverse trials.

1. DISCIPLINE SANCTIFIES

Without a doubt, during your childhood you received some form of discipline, either frequently or occasionally. You never liked it; perhaps you didn't understand it, or thought it was just not fair at that time. Yet now, as you look back, you can understand that these measures were right, and were for your good. God works the same way with His children. (Read Deuteronomy 8:5.) God's punishment is for correction, and not an end in itself. This is the reason why divine chastisement is another means of sanctification, "*...that we might be partakers of his holiness*" as we read in Hebrews 12:10.

WHEN DOES GOD CHASTISE?

God chastises His children when one of them refuses to obey Him. Example: Jonah. If you, as a child of God, consciously begin to live in disobedience to the Lord, it is very likely that God will apply some form of chastisement in order for you to repent and return to Him.

If God disciplines you at some time, don't be surprised; neither should you give up nor turn your back on Him. Remember that God does this because He loves you, and His purpose is that you separate yourself from sin and walk closer to Him. The reason God corrects His children is to sanctify them. Psalm 39:11 says that with rebukes God corrects man from iniquity.

2. TRIALS SANCTIFY (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Trials are another means that God uses to sanctify us. A trial is a difficulty, a tough situation that God places us in, which reveals the quality of our faith so that we know what is in our heart. (Read Deuteronomy 8:2.) Trials are to purify us and cause us to grow in holiness.

GOD'S PRIORITY

God's priority is your growth in the faith: your sanctification. For God, your faith is much more precious than gold. Just as the goldsmith melts the gold because he wants to burn out the impurities and make that gold more pure and valuable, so God permits divers trials in our lives to sanctify and cleanse us.

DIVERS TEMPTATIONS

The Apostle Peter warns us that we will be subject to divers (many) temptations (trials). James says the same thing (James 1:2). "*Divers temptations*" means, different types of trials such as: sicknesses, poverty, danger, threats, accidents, death, material loss, enemies, injustice, etc. Some are tried one way, others another, but all the believers WITHOUT EXCEPTION were, are, and will be tried by the Lord. YOU ALSO WILL BE! The Apostle Paul said: "*we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22) At times God permits chronic trials in some of His children. (Read of Paul's "thorn" in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.)

DON'T BE SURPRISED BY YOUR TRIALS (1 Peter 4:12)

When you have a trial overcome you, don't ask: "Why is this happening to me?" Remember that trials are normal and frequent in all Christians. Instead of complaining, make it a habit of praising God and giving Him thanks! Not for the trial in itself, because no trial is pleasant, but rather for what that trial will produce in you. James 1:2-3 says: "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*" The term "patience" here is translated from the Greek word "hypomone" which means to face difficulties with firm faith. In other words, the trials temper us, strengthen our faith, give our character stability, and help us mature! Job said (Read his wonderful story) "*When he trieth me, I shall come forth as gold.*" (Job 23:10). Paul, writing to the Romans says: "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...*" (Romans 8:28) and the next verse makes it clear that "*all things work together*" for God's purpose, which is that we be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).

YOU WILL BE TEMPTED IN EVERY TRIAL

You must know that each and every trial that God permits in your life will never be greater than your capacity of resistance. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we read: "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD IS FAITHFUL, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*"

At any rate, if you are not watching as you ought; and you aren't in prayer at the time a trial comes upon you; and you don't go through it praying, it is possible that you sin. Remember that each trial (that God allows for your good) the tempter will also be present to try to cause you to sin somehow. That's why you must be on guard. Watch and pray so you don't fall (Matthew 26:41). Love God and trust in Him. Accept whatever He sends you with patience and humility, and the trial will pass and you will have overcome!

LESSON 6: QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, explain what sanctification means: _____

2. The fruit of being IN CHRIST is manifested by two things. What are they?
 1. _____
 2. _____

3. Must you as a believer grow to be holy, or grow in holiness? _____

4. Sanctification is a continuous _____. When does this process end?

5. Romans chapter 6 presents 2 basic facts. What are they?
I am _____ to _____
I am _____ unto _____

6. What are the five steps to sanctification, according to Romans chapter 6?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

7. _____ and _____ are two things God uses to sanctify the believer.

8. When and why does God chastise the believer? _____

9. What is God's priority in the believer's life? _____

10. What is the correct attitude a Christian should have in the time of trials? _____

11. According to Mat. 26.41, what must you do in the time of trials, knowing that you will be tempted?

LESSON 7: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Memory Verse:

*"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."
Ephesians 5.18*

The time has come to talk about the Holy Spirit and His work regarding your new life IN CHRIST. Among other important things that we have dealt with regarding your new life IN CHRIST, there are two that we want to remember now:

First: Because you have received Christ, you have a perfect position before God.

Second: Because you have received Christ, you have the capacity to live a new life; a holy life; the life of Christ.

In other words: to "walk as Christ walked" (1 John 2:6; Colossians 2:6); but in order to be able to walk as Christ walked, you must learn to WALK IN THE SPIRIT.

TO BE ABLE TO WALK AS CHRIST WALKED, YOU MUST LEARN TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is a divine person; the third person of the trinity, and shares the same essence with the Father and the Son. Although we don't understand the biblical doctrine of the trinity, we accept it by faith, and with a spirit of admiration and reverence.

Definition of the trinity:

God is one in essence, but manifested in three persons:

THE FATHER

THE SON

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE WORK OF THE TRINITY

The Bible not only teaches us that the trinity is made up of three persons and that the three of them form only one God, but the particular work of each one of them is also distinguished.

(Read 2 Corinthians 13:14.) In this passage the work that each one of the three persons of the divine trinity does in behalf of the believer is summed up in a few words:

1. **GOD THE FATHER:** The love of God is the fountain of all spiritual blessings. God loved us so much, that He decided to save us and planned our salvation.
2. **GOD THE SON:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ made His giving of Himself for us possible. In other words, the Son carried out what the Father planned in our behalf,.
3. **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT:** The Holy Spirit imparts the infinite grace of Christ to us. The Spirit applies Christ's redemptive work to our souls.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTE

The Holy Spirit is the only authentic substitute of Christ in this world. In John chapter 14, Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit, which would come to take His place. (Read John 14:15-18; John 16:7, 26.)

The disciples became sad and disappointed when Christ announced that He would return to heaven. Those disciples, who during three years had learned to live in closeness with the Master; that had seen His power and His glory; that had believed and confessed that HE was the Son of God, the Messiah in whom they had put all of their hope, now would be left alone. What would they do alone without the Lord? The Master had told them *"without me you can do nothing"* But now Jesus was promising them: *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"* (John 14:18). What was Jesus referring to? He was referring to the fact that He would return to them in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Notice that Jesus did not say that he would send them His comfort, but rather "THE COMFORTER" (Greek "PARAKLETOS") whose most exact translation would be "HELPER". Jesus continues and says: *"...that He may abide with you forever... ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."* (John 14:16-17). *"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."* (John 16:7)

Later, just before His return to heaven, Jesus gave His disciples the order to stay in Jerusalem, because a few days after that, the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them would be fulfilled (Acts 1:4-5).

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE

And the promise was fulfilled! The Holy Spirit descended and filled the lives of the disciples with His presence and power (Acts 2:1-4). From that day on, every person who repents of his sins and accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, besides receiving and becoming all that we have seen in this course, also will receive the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTE: The One who takes Christ's place. (Read Acts 2:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14.)

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

His work from the outside: The Spirit works in favor of the sinner; giving him light, convincing of sin, giving repentance and faith, and moves the lost towards Christ (John 16:8-11).

His work from the inside: As the sinner repents and accepts Christ, the Holy Spirit works in his heart and regenerates him, fills him, sanctifies him, and gives him the power to live his new life IN CHRIST.

THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN YOU

During your conversion, the Holy Spirit comes to live in your life. DID YOU KNOW THAT? Christ himself is living in you in the person of the Spirit. Paul says:

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is in you to sanctify you, to give you strength and victory.

The Holy Spirit is in you to live the life of Christ through you.

The Holy Spirit is in you so that you can live the abundant life, YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

Ephesians 5:18 says:

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

When a person is under the effects of alcohol, he speaks and acts in totally different way, generally more daring and without inhibitions.

Something similar happens when we are filled with the Spirit, but the difference lies in that the alcohol a person drinks in excess causes that person to sin, and the Holy Spirit controls the mind, emotions and will of the believer, leading him to live in holiness.

HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Being FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT is not the result of any mystical experience. It is basically and simply the result of surrendering oneself unconditionally to the lordship of Christ.

Saying NO to the flesh, the world and to Satan; seeking God in prayer, praising, and reading the Bible; attending church services and having spiritual conversations is how you will be filled with the Spirit. (Read Ephesians 5:18-20; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Romans 13:13-14; Acts 4:29-31.)

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

The Biblical commandment is not only to "BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT", but also "WALK IN THE SPIRIT". (Read Galatians 5:16-25.) Walking in the Spirit is the result of being filled with Him. If you are filled with the Spirit, you will walk in the Spirit; consequently the fruit of the Spirit will be part of your daily life with these manifestations: "*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*" and we could add virtues such as mercy, courage, holiness, truth, righteousness, humility, honesty, etc. to that list, using other passages of the Scriptures.

VISIBLE RESULTS OF WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

These are some of the visible results that the believer who walks in the Spirit will see:

1. His relationship with the Lord: He loves the Lord above all else and trembles at His Word. He desires to obey Him and please Him in all things. He feels greatly burdened by the smallest fault, and confesses his sin immediately. He lives a life of prayer, praise and thanksgiving. He lives separated from all sinful practices and is consecrated to the service of the Lord. He trusts in the Lord; he looks for His guidance in all things and waits on Him. He does not worry about the future. He confronts trials with an attitude that pleases God. (Read Matthew 22:37; Isaiah 66:2; Colossians 1:10; Acts 24:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Romans 12:12.)
2. His relationship to the church: He sincerely loves all of the brethren. He treats them with respect, and is friendly and cordial. He occupies himself in edifying the church with words of encouragement and exhortation. He seeks to please all. He attends all the services. He fulfills his ministry faithfully. He looks out for others, putting them first. He seeks peace and harmony. He is willing to help others in their needs. He prays for the brethren. He always has a forgiving spirit towards everyone. He is an example of the believers in all things. His life is a blessing for all of his brothers and sisters. He is transparent and faithful. His word has credibility. He never lies, never gossips. He rejoices with those who rejoice, weeps with those who weep. (Read Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; Romans 15:1-3; Hebrews 10:15; 1 Peter 4:10; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 12:25-26; James 5:16; Colossians 3:9; James 4:11; Romans 12:15.)
3. His relationship to the lost: He feels a deep love for sinners. He witnesses to all without fear or shame. He prays for the sinners. He invites them to attend church. He visits them and takes them the Gospel message. He is eager to share his joy of finding new contacts. He willingly speaks with the new people who come to church, trying to start a friendship, because He wants to win them to Christ. He witnesses with such passion, conviction and love for the Lord that those who he speaks to are impressed and touched. He is greatly used to reach the lost. He doesn't get discouraged or downhearted because of those that reject his message. Although he is sad for them, he continues witnessing, because he knows that others will believe. (Read Romans 9:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:7-8; Romans 10:1; Acts 11:19-24; Acts 4:23-31; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:58.)

4. His relationship to his family: The wife humbly submits to her husband as to the Lord, treating him with respect and seeking to make him happy. The husband treats his wife with tenderness, respect and love. There are no harsh words, and no violence or abuse. There is open dialogue. They raise their children in the Lord's ways, giving them all the love they need. They read the Bible to them, pray with them, and teach them to obey the Lord. They live in such a way that their children are converted and are faithful to the Lord. Children obey their parents in all things, and live thankful and happy in their home. They help their parents in all they can. They love and respect their brothers and sisters. (Read Ephesians 5:21 - 6:4; 1 Peter 3:1-9; Colossians 3:18-21.)
5. His relationship to others: The Christian who walks in the Spirit submits himself to the authorities and prays for them. He obeys his boss or employer. He respects his professors, teachers and fellow students or co-workers. He is punctual, diligent and works at fulfilling his responsibilities with excellence. He is friendly and kind to everyone. (Read Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22 – 4:1; Colossians 4:5-6; Titus 2:9-12; Philippians 4:5; Philippians 2:14-15.)
6. Regarding his personal life: The believer who is walking in the Spirit enjoys complete peace and joy. He has victory over sin. He gives thanks in all things and lives content with what he has. He has order and discipline in his life. He has self-control, caring for his body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He is moderate in food and drink. He does not eat, drink or take part in anything that he knows is harmful to his health. If he is overweight, he tries to get back to normal. When he is sick, he sees the doctor. (Read Romans 14:17; Acts 13:52; Romans 15:13; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Peter 1:6; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.)

CONCLUSION

Remember what we said in Lesson 2?

DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME AND YOUR ENERGY TRYING TO
PRODUCE FRUITS OF A NEW LIFE, BECAUSE *YOU CAN'T DO IT!*

Instead, die to **YOURSELF**, and surrender yourself unconditionally to the lordship of Jesus Christ. This way, the Holy Spirit will be free to reproduce Christ's virtues in you. (Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 3.18)

YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BUT ONLY WHEN YOU WALK IN THE SPIRIT.

Start walking in the Spirit **NOW!**

LESSON 7: QUESTIONS

1. To "walk as Christ walked" (1 John 2:6) you must learn to _____

2. The Holy Spirit is a _____. He is the _____ person of the _____.
3. Who is the only true substitute of Christ in this world? _____
4. What is the biblical passage to back up this truth? _____
5. What biblical passage tells of the fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit?

6. Who gives light, convinces of sin, gives repentance and faith and turns souls toward Christ?

7. In your own words, explain the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

8. How is the believer filled with the Holy Spirit?

9. The result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is _____ in the Spirit.
10. What are some of the results of walking in the Spirit that a Christian experiences regarding his relationship with the Lord? _____

11. What are some of the characteristics of the Christian who is walking in the Spirit, respecting the church? _____

12. How can you describe the attitude and behavior that a believer that is walking in the Spirit has, regarding the lost? _____

13. Describe the family relationships of the believers who walk in the Spirit. _____

14. As for dealing with other people, how can we identify a Christian who walks in the Spirit?

15. The believer who walks in the Spirit has certain virtues in his personal life. What are some of them?

16. Can you produce fruits of a new life? _____

17. What must you do in order to let the Holy Spirit have the freedom to reproduce the virtues of Christ in you? _____

LESSON 8: VICTORY OVER SATAN

Memory Verse:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

James 4:7

INTRODUCTION

Satan is a spiritual being who is totally evil and very powerful. He is God and man's Number One Enemy. He is furious because you have been freed from his hold on you, and will do everything possible to make you fall back into sin; or at least slow down or stop your growth and sanctification. At any rate, because you are IN CHRIST, you have victory over him!

IN CHRIST YOU OVERCOME SATAN

The redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ includes total victory over Satan and his demons. Colossians 2:15 states: *"triumphing over them (principalities and powers) in it (the cross)."* Because you are IN CHRIST, you, too, have victory over Satan!

Ephesians 1:20-21 teaches us that Christ, having been raised from the dead and now being in heaven, is sitting at God's *"own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, dominion, and every name that is named..."* But that's not all, because Ephesians 2:6 adds that God has *"raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."!!*

Praise the Lord! Thank Him! Rejoice in this wonderful truth! Jesus Christ's victory over Satan is YOUR VICTORY! But...

BEWARE: SATAN IS ON THE LOOSE (1 Peter 5:8-9)

The Bible teaches us that in the future, Satan will be tied by an angel for the space of a thousand years, during which time he won't be able to tempt or deceive anyone (Revelations 20:1-10). Then he will be free for some time, to later be condemned to eternal punishment in hell.

As we see, all of this will take place in the future. That means that at the present time, Satan is on the loose. Although Christ won the victory over him and the countdown until his well-deserved condemnation started on Christ's cross, remember that Satan and his demons are alive and loose, causing disasters in the world and attacking the church with fury. The Bible compares Satan with a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. This is a terrifying image. Yet, **don't let that scare you**, but DO obey the commandment to **be sober and alert, and resist the devil, firm in the faith**. If you do this, Satan will not be able to harm you. (Read 1 John 5:8.)

HOW DOES SATAN WORK

1. WITH CLEVERNESS AND DECEIT.

Satan works today the same way he did in the beginning, in the Garden of Eden: with a lot of cleverness, using deceit as one of his most effective weapons, in order to kill. (Read Genesis 3.) Jesus teaches us that Satan is a murderer and a liar. (Read John 8:44.)

2. USING MANY DIFFERENT DISGUISES

Paul said that "...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14) Because of that he was afraid that the Corinthians would be deceived, (2 Corinthians 11:3) and therefore gave them a well-timed warning, so that they might learn to identify the enemy behind his many disguises. Satan can approach you in the form of a woman, or of a man. He can do it also in the form of an attitude, or a job; a sport; in material things, or in money; in the form of false prophets, etc.

3. WITH FIRM PERSEVERANCE.

There are no limits to the strategies and tactics of the devil. If he fails with one thing, he will try with another, and will constantly attempt to make you fall in the trap. Satan never gets discouraged; he acts with firm perseverance. As long as you live, Satan will try to deceive you.

HOW TO RESIST SATAN (James 4:7)

Although IN CHRIST you have victory over Satan, there is something that you must learn to do regarding him: RESIST HIM!

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OR GOD (Ephesians 6:10-20)

You are at war with Satan and his army of evil spirits. It is a spiritual war, and for that reason, the weapons you must use are also spiritual. God has provided all the weapons you need to resist the enemy. IT DEPENDS ON YOU if you will put on the armor of God to resist the devil!

THE PARTS OF THE ARMOR OF GOD

THE BELT OF TRUTH

Make your life a life of truth. Believe that which is true, love truth. Think of true things at all times, and act according to the truth. Remember this:

SATAN IS A LIAR
JESUS IS THE TRUTH; HIS WORD IS ALSO TRUE.
STAND FIRM IN THE TRUTH.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

You are righteous IN CHRIST, but you also must be righteous in your every day walk! Practice righteousness in your home; at work; in school; on the street; in church. Practice righteousness at ALL TIMES, IN ALL PLACES AND IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE, and you will live safe. (Read 1 Peter 3:13; Proverbs 28:1.)

THE SHOES OF PEACE

Love peace and follow after it. Be a person who promotes peace. (Read Matthew 5:9; Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:3.) Live in harmony with all. Seek friendship; practice reconciliation and forgiveness. Be careful to maintain peace in your soul, in your home and in the church. Each day when you get up, put on your shoes of PEACE. (1 Peter 3:10-11)

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Have complete trust in God and in His promises. Your life is in God's hands. Don't fear the fiery darts of the wicked that the enemy shoots at you and will continue to shoot. Resist lies, doubts, discouragement, adverse situations, covering yourself with the shield of faith. (Read 1 John 5:4.)

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

The most important and vulnerable part of the body is the head. Use the helmet! Thousands die because they don't use their helmet. The helmet of salvation has to do with the assurance of your salvation. To have the helmet on, means that you are completely sure of your salvation and rejoicing in it. It is to be able to say with all certainty: "I am a child of God! I'm saved! I have eternal life!" Have your helmet on at all times, and when the devil bombards your mind with doubts, his darts will not harm you. (Read 1 John 5:11-13.)

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

The sword was the principal offensive weapon of the Roman soldier. In a figurative sense of the word, the sword refers to the Word of God. (Read Hebrews 4:12; Revelations 1:12-16; Deuteronomy 33:29.) The sword of the Spirit is **QUICK AND POWERFUL**, and you can learn to use it in your battle against the devil. It is the only thing that is effective against him and can harm him.

The Lord Jesus gave us a wonderful lesson on how to use the sword of the Spirit when the devil attacked him in the desert. Let's read Matthew 4:1-11 and learn from Him.

FIRST ATTACK: (Matthew 4:3)

Satan used doubt: "... *if thou be the Son of God...*" "Let's see...show me your divinity converting these stones into bread." Jesus counterattacked the devil by piercing him with His sword, quoting "**IT IS WRITTEN**" and continued reciting the words of Deuteronomy 8:3: "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

RESULT OF THE FIRST ATTACK: JESUS WON!

SECOND ATTACK: (Matthew 4:5-6)

This time, Satan also used the sword to tempt Jesus. He recited the passage of Psalm 91:11-12, but he used it incorrectly. Not because he interpreted the Bible wrong, but rather because he twisted the Scriptures!

Satan tried to deceive Jesus the same way that he deceived Eve, twisting the Word of God, but he couldn't do it. Jesus knew the Scriptures very well and immediately knew that although the devil said the verse correctly, it was out of context. Jesus counterattacked with the sword of the Word of God and once again told the enemy "**IT IS WRITTEN**", "*thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*". Here he used the passage of Deuteronomy 6:26.

RESULT OF THE SECOND ATTACK: JESUS WON!

THIRD ATTACK: (Matthew 4:8-9)

Satan thought: "I'll try to make Jesus fall with this last try." So he offered him glory, riches, power, without having to go through the humiliation of the cross; He simply would have had to bow down and worship Satan.

Jesus counterattacked him the third time with His sword saying: "*Get thee hence, Satan: for IT IS WRITTEN: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*", quoting Deuteronomy 6:13.

RESULT OF THE THIRD ATTACK: JESUS WON!

DEAR FELLOW BELIEVER: Do you realize the power that the Word of God has in your battle against the devil? Love the Word of God! Believe it! Memorize it! Obey it! And this way, when you are tempted, the Holy Spirit will help you, giving you strength and making you remember Bible verses to counterattack the enemy, who will then flee from you.

PRAYER (Ephesians 6:18)

All of the spiritual weapons would be useless without prayer. For this reason, the apostle unites this last exhortation to the list of weapons as he wraps it up. (Read Ephesians 6:10-11, 18.) Notice that the exhortation to watch in prayer at ALL times, praying for ALL THE BELIEVERS is regarding the spiritual war we are experiencing.

Why must you pray daily not only for yourself but for all the believers? Because we have an enemy that is against us day and night, whose only purpose and goal is to discourage us, to cause us to stray away from the will of God and to cause His divine plans to go awry. But God has put a VERY POWERFUL weapon in our hands: PRAYER! He commands us to pray, TRULY PRAY, so that as a result of our prayers, Satan's plans will be frustrated! Keep in mind, then, that sometimes you will need to pray this way:

Example: "Lord, send your angels to protect the missionary and his family in regards to this perverse plan of the enemy." (Read 1 Thessalonians 2:18.)

Example: "Lord, remove that evil spirit from the Perez home. She has them deceived and has blinded their eyes so that they might not be saved." (Read 2 Corinthians 4:4.)

Be aware of the work of the enemy in your life and in the life of others, and raise prayers up against him. In the meantime, live in the fear of God so that your prayers destroy the devil's plans. Remember that:

"THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH" (James 5:18)

DON'T GIVE THE DEVIL ROOM (Ephesians 4:27; 2 Corinthians 2:11)

The devil is like a mouse that gets into a house through a very small hole, without being noticed, until he begins to chew, eat and gnaw away, damaging whatever he feeds on. Satan wants to harm you, devour you, and destroy you; but in order to do that, he needs you to give him some room, just a little bit of room to be able to enter and work in your life. DON'T GIVE HIM THAT ROOM!

CONFESS YOUR SINS IMMEDIATELY

You give the devil room when you leave yourself open to temptation. If you do that, you surely will end up sinning. But you also give the devil room when, after having sinned, you DO NOT confess that sin immediately.

Pay close attention to the passages of Ephesians 4:26-27 and 2 Corinthians 2:11. A sin as simple as anger, unconfessed, gives the devil room. Resentment gives the devil an advantage over you. Be very careful, because although you are dead to sin, and Satan is not your owner any more, any sin that you hide in your heart will take away spiritual power from your life; you will lose your joy and peace, and it will lead you to committing other sins. Lastly, you could end up being controlled by the enemy, although not possessed by him.

SATAN DOESN'T WANT YOU TO CONFESS

The tempter lives in the secret that exists between him and you. As long as there are secret things in your life that no one know about, Satan will have dominion over your soul. But in the very moment that sin is discovered, the darkness will lose it's power over you. That's why Satan does not want you to confess. Don't go along with his deceit! Don't give him that room! Confess your sin!

- ◆ Is there any sin that you have not yet confessed to the Lord? Kneel down and ask for His forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)
- ◆ Are you offended with someone, or do you harbor resentment? Go and make peace with that person NOW. (Ephesians 4:26; Hebrews 12:15)
- ◆ Are you holding on to any prohibited object of your old life that you should have destroyed? Destroy it! (Acts 19:19)

Every sin that is not confessed grants the devil the right to work in our lives and do terrible damage. Do not EVER hide a sin. Make it a habit of confessing it immediately, be it big or small. This way, God will forgive you and Satan won't be able to harm you. (Read Proverbs 28:13.)

Read the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11, and you will discover the results of giving the devil room to work. Pay close attention to verse 3.

Read the story of Judas, and how he fell because of having given room to the devil. (John 13:2, 21-27; Matthew 26:14-16; Matthew 27:3-5)

DON'T GIVE ROOM TO THE DEVIL!

Reject every bad thought immediately!

And if you sin, CONFESS IT TO THE LORD IMMEDIATELY!

LESSON 8: QUESTIONS

1. Because the believer is _____, he has victory over Satan, God's Number One Enemy.
2. What should you, as a believer, do so that Satan does not harm you? _____

3. Satan works with much _____, using his most effective weapon. What is this weapon, and what is his purpose? _____

4. You must learn to _____ the enemy with his many different costumes.
5. Knowing that Satan works with firm perseverance, how long will he keep trying to deceive you?

6. Although IN CHRIST you have victory over Satan, what must you do regarding him?

7. To be able to resist the devil, you must put on _____.
8. What is the only effective weapon in our battle with Satan? _____.
9. How did Jesus win the victory over Satan in Matthew 4:1-11? _____

10. In order for Satan to harm you, devour you and destroy you, he needs you to _____

11. When does the believer give the devil room to work? _____

12. In your own words, explain why Satan doesn't want you to confess each sin. _____

13. Why is prayer necessary in the spiritual war, according to Ephesians chapter 6? _____

LESSON 9: BAPTISM

Memory Verse:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Mark 16:16

INTRODUCTION

Now that you have repented and received the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord of your life; now that you have been forgiven, justified and adopted by God as His child; now that you have been sanctified and are living a new life IN CHRIST; Is there anything else that you must do?...Yes! There is a very important step that you must take, and it is to be BAPTIZED.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM (Mark 16:15-16)

Baptism is important because it is God who commands all those who believe in Jesus Christ to be baptized. For this reason, no one should consider baptism as a simple ceremony that should be observed to please one's parents, the pastor and/or the church. It is of divine origin.

THE APOSTLES EMPHASIZED BAPTISM

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles ordered all those who believed in Christ to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). All those who were converted to the Lord in the early church were baptized. (Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36-39; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8)

BAPTISM IS RELATED TO SALVATION

In Mark 16:16, Jesus' words are very clear: "**He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved.**" We can see that Jesus connected baptism with salvation. They are not separate. He did not say: "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized", but rather: "**HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED.**"

Of course, you are saved since you received Christ and if you happen to pass away before you are baptized, you will go to heaven. So then, you may ask, Why is baptism related to salvation? Continue with the lesson and you will have the answer.

BAPTISM: THE COMPLETION OF SALVATION

God's call to mankind in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament has always been: "*Turn ye even to me with all your heart...*" (Joel 2:12)

Conversion, concisely, is TURNING TOWARDS GOD.

Conversion is not something passive, or something that is felt, but rather it is something dynamic; something that is done. It is the unconditional response that a person gives to the Gospel, and that affects the whole person. It means committing oneself with Christ to live for God. Acts 26:18 says: *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*

TO BE CONVERTED is not only accepting Christ.
TO BE CONVERTED is not only escaping hell.
TO BE CONVERTED is not only admitting that we are sinners.
TO BE CONVERTED is not only a change of habits.
TO BE CONVERTED is not only singing praises, praying, and attending church.

TO BE CONVERTED MEANS:

- ◆ To die to sin and live for God
- ◆ To renounce the kingdom of darkness and pass into the Kingdom of Light

TO BE CONVERTED IS TO SAY:

- ◆ THAT'S ENOUGH! . . . Up until now I've lived under the authority of sin and Satan, but from today on, I will live only for my Lord and Savior.
- ◆ THAT'S ENOUGH! . . . Up until now I've lived doing things my way, but today I surrender myself and consecrate myself to the Lord completely to obey Him in everything and at all times.

TO BE CONVERTED IS: A COMMITMENT WITH CHRIST

Now, is there any way that you can make your conversion complete? Of course! **BEING BAPTIZED!** Baptism is the seal that puts a final and complete end to the world, sin, Satan, and your "I". It also establishes the starting point of a life that is entirely consecrated to the Lord.

THE VIRTUE OF BAPTISM

What is it that makes baptism so important? Does it, in itself, have some purifying or saving virtue?
NO.

Baptism in and of itself has no saving virtue. A person can be baptized once or a thousand times and still be living in the kingdom of darkness.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

The meaning of the word "baptism":

Baptism comes from the Greek word "baptism" that literally means "submerge". The correct baptism is baptism by submersion. (Read Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39.)

The meaning of baptism itself:

Baptism is an outward, symbolic representation of an internal reality. In the act of baptism, the believer witnesses to these three truths:

1. CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST (Romans 6:6, 11)

This means that he has died to sin. Dying to sin is not only a legal position, but also an experience of victory over sin, thanks to the power of Christ that is applied to the believer by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:1-2)

2. BURIED WITH CHRIST (Romans 6:4)

Who is burial for? Only for the dead. When one is baptized, he is proclaimed DEAD AND APT FOR THE GRAVE. There is an old life and a new life; an old man and a new man. Between the two of them there is a grave, and this grave is baptism. God has crucified this old man, but you must agree in being sent TO THE GRAVE.

Baptism is very important, because it separates you from your old life. It means to make a definite and conscious end to it. It means saying GOODBYE to the world and sin forever.

3. RISEN WITH CHRIST. (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12)

When the believer comes out of the water, he witnesses that he has been born again and that he lives a new life IN CHRIST (2 Corinthians 5:17). Just as Christ no longer had contact with sinners after he was risen, so he who is baptized must also live no longer in communion with the darkness, because he has died to sin and is alive unto Christ. (Romans 6:2, 10-11; Galatians 2:20; 3:27)

BAPTISM: AN ETERNAL, FORMAL AGREEMENT WITH CHRIST

We've already seen that to be converted is to commit oneself to Christ forever. This commitment, or formal agreement, with the Lord is sealed in baptism. So we also see that baptism not only represents something that took place in me; but something else also takes place in the baptism IN FAITH which is very important: I am completing my conversion!

When a believer is not interested in being baptized, he is showing that he is not totally sure and convinced that JESUS CHRIST IS HIS LORD, or that he is not sure if he wants to give up sin forever. He shows that he still loves the world and does not consider following Christ the most important thing in his life.

EXAMPLE: THE BELIEVER WHO DOESN'T WANT TO BE BAPTIZED is like the groom who does not want to get married, having all the possibilities to do so. This attitude causes the bride to have great doubts. Why doesn't he want to get married? ... Maybe he has another girl... maybe he doesn't really love me... Jesus said that the person who loves Him will keep His Word.

Dear friend: If you truly love the Lord; if you have renounced the world, sin and Satan and your own life; if you are living in victory; if you are totally convinced that JESUS CHRIST IS THE KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS; THE ONLY SAVIOR; THE ONLY WAY; THE ONLY TRUTH AND THE LIFE; if you are willing to love Him, obey Him and serve Him until you die, then..

"...why tarriest thou? ...arise, and be baptized. . ." (Acts 22:16)

LESSON 9: QUESTIONS

1. Being that _____ himself orders the believer in Jesus to be baptized, we can say that the origin of baptism is _____.

2. How do we know that the apostles put emphasis on baptism? Give several examples.

3. In which passage can we see that Jesus related baptism with salvation? _____

4. Explain what "conversion" is in your own words. _____

5. Baptism is an _____ representation of an _____ reality.

6. What does the believer testify to as he arises out of the water? _____

7. What does the believer seal in his baptism? _____

8. What are the three truths represented in baptism?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

9. The believer who is not interested in being baptized is showing some things. What are they?

LESSON 10: THE CHURCH

Memory Verse:

"Christ ... loved the church and gave himself for it."

Ephesians 5:25

INTRODUCTION

Until now, we have been considering your progress in your Christian life as an individual. In this lesson, we will consider your progress in your Christian life regarding the church and its purposes.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

The word "church" is the translation of the Greek noun "EKKLESIA" that literally means "called out". In the New Testament a congregation of those who have been called by God is referred to as a church.

THE CHURCH BELONGS TO CHRIST

Jesus told Peter: "... upon this rock I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:18) Using the figure of a building, Jesus declared to Peter that:

THE CHURCH BELONGS TO HIM
HE HIMSELF WILL BUILD IT

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

The church was founded by the apostles. The foundation of it took place the day of Pentecost. The history of its beginning can be found in Acts 2:1-47. Here we find the promise and prophecy of Matthew 16:18 fulfilled.

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

The same passage in Acts 2:38-41 teaches us that the members of the church were men and women that were added to it when they believed, repented, and were baptized. After 2,000 years, the requirements to be a member of the church continue to be the same as in the beginning: believe, repent (be converted) and be baptized.

In the lesson on baptism, we saw that to be baptized is to seal an eternal commitment with Christ. Here we add that this commitment with Christ implies also a commitment with HIS church, which is the body of Christ.

THE CHURCH: THE BODY OF CHRIST (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

In the apostolic era, no one argued if a person who was converted and baptized should become part of the church or not, because everyone knew that upon being baptized, the believers automatically were "added" to the Body. (Acts 2:41, 47)

To pretend to belong to Christ, but without belonging to the church, without being united and active in a local church, is like pretending to be a hand and function as such, but separated from the body.

HOW THE CHURCH FUNCTIONS

OBEDIENCE TO THE HEAD (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18)

Using the analogy of the human body, Paul teaches us that Christ, the head that is in heaven, directs His body on the earth. The head speaks of authority and direction. The head gives the orders, and the body obeys, and it's not the other way around.

In order that my body functions correctly, all of the members must obey the head. This is also true of the body of Christ, since the Bible teaches us that we all must be subject to Christ: "... *the church is subject unto Christ...*" (Ephesians 5:24)

OBEDIENCE TO THE PASTORS (Hebrews 13:17)

Although it is true, as we've seen, that Christ is the Authority in His church, and we must obey Him in all things, it is also true that the members of a local church must also obey their leader, being that he has been placed by God as the leader of his congregation. The pastor is God's delegate. He is a spiritual teacher, responsible for seeing that the church is instructed in The Truth; that it holds onto sound doctrine; that the believers live in holiness; that the church continues to grow and fulfill its mission in this world. Only Jesus Christ possesses the legislative power in the church, but the pastor represents the executive power in the congregation.

The greatest joy that a pastor can have is to see that those whom he is pastoring are strong in the Lord. (3 John 4) The worst disappointment for the pastor is seeing a person he is responsible for leave God's ways.

ALL OF THE MEMBERS ARE IMPORTANT

The human body is made up of many members: eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, fingers, legs, feet, etc. Each member is different; yet all are important and necessary.

The body of Christ also has many members. All are different; yet all are necessary and important. (Read 1 Corinthians 12:14, 21.)

EACH MEMBER MUST FUNCTION

If my eyes don't function, I can't see; if my ears don't work, I can't hear; if my legs are not functioning, I can't walk. When any member of the body does not function, the entire body suffers loss.

In the same way, the body of Christ is disabled when a member of the body is not functioning. On the other hand, when each member in the church fulfills its ministry, the body is edified. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

**EACH MEMBER MUST LOVE, CARE FOR, MAKE BEAUTIFUL,
AND DEFEND THE CHURCH (Ephesians 5:25)**

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Therefore, every believer must love the church as Christ loved it, and in a certain sense, give himself for it, serving the Lord through the church with joy, diligence and sacrifice, so that the church prosper and triumph.

FELLOWSHIP AMONG THE MEMBERS (Acts 2:42: 1 John 1:7)

The word fellowship that we find approximately twelve times in the New Testament, is a translation of the Greek word "koinonia", which means: to have in common, participation and companionship.

All who have been converted to Christ experience a precious spiritual relationship of love with Him. John says: *"truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."* (1 John 1:3) But in the same passage he also says: *"that ye also may have fellowship with us."*

Just as we have a precious relationship with Christ, which we must nurture and care for day after day, we also have precious fellowship with the brethren in the faith, which we must care for and perfect day by day.

The fellowship in the body must not be superficial, but rather based on our caring for one another in a real, practical way. Fellowship among the members is based on love, which is the perfect bond. (Colossians 3:14)

Fellowship in the church is made possible when each one of the believers obey the exhortations of Ephesians 4:1-16 and Colossians 3:1-17 among many others that the New Testament contains.

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

We understand that discipline is the action the local church is obliged to take with one of its members when he or she holds to a serious doctrinal error or commits a scandalous sin; when he or she has been practicing and covering up a sin, living in hypocrisy and being an impediment to the growth of the congregation. Discipline is something necessary to preserve the testimony and purity of the church.

KINDS OF DISCIPLINE

Private: This is when a member in sin is corrected by another believer with love, just between the two of them (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). No complaint against a fellow believer should ever be taken to the pastor or the church without first having attempted to correct it personally.

Public: When the offense is serious and public, or when the believer refuses to acknowledge his sin following a private correction, discipline must be carried out by the church, according to 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Matthew 18:15-17.

Discipline in the church is applied according to the case. For this reason, each case must be treated in a special way to determine the measures that must be applied. Basically, the discipline may consist of exclusion from the participation of the Lord's supper and all other member's meetings; the temporary exclusion of the ministry that the offending believer is involved in, in the church. In some cases it may be necessary for the offending believer to ask for forgiveness publically in a meeting. The duration of the discipline can be for several months or more, depending on the sin committed and the repentance of the believer. Finally, the most severe discipline that the church applies is ex-communication.

To ex-communicate someone from the church means that he is no longer in the membership. (1 Corinthians 5:1-13) The ex-communicated member is no longer considered a brother/sister, and therefore loses all of his rights and privileges in the church. (Matthew 18:17)

REASONS FOR DISCIPLINE

1. One reason for discipline in the church is GOD'S HOLINESS. As the body of Christ, the church also is holy and is called to live in holiness. When there is sin in the body, the Head is shamed. (1 Peter 1:14-17)
2. A second reason for discipline is to separate the erring believer so that others don't follow them as a bad example. "A little leaven leaveneth (meaning "corrupts") the whole lump". (Read 1 Corinthians 5:6 and also 1 Timothy 5:20.)
3. The third reason for discipline is so that the erring believer may be convinced of their sin and motivated to repent. (2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Matthew 18:15; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; Galatians 6:1)

THE ORDINANCE OF THE CHURCH

The ordinances are symbolic rites that the church observes. The ordinances of the church, which some call "sacraments" are two: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both ordinances were established by the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore are obligatory in the church.

As we already studied baptism in the last lesson, here we will only consider the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

ESTABLISHED BY CHRIST

(Read Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

OBSERVED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

(Read Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a ceremony that commemorates the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which His believers, baptized members of a Christian church, eat bread and drink wine, which are symbols of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord Jesus for our redemption. (Read Matthew 27:17-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.)

THE PURPOSE OF ITS CELEBRATION

TO COMMEMORATE THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF OUR SAVIOR

The purpose is to commemorate the redemptive work of our Savior. The Jewish people celebrated their most solemn feast each year, the Passover, in which they commemorated the great liberation of their slavery from Egypt by God's power (Read Exodus 12). In the same way, the believers in Jesus meet on a regular basis to celebrate the Lord's Supper (our Passover, according to 1 Corinthians 5:7) in which we remember with love and thankfulness, the "Lamb of God", who gained the eternal redemption of our souls by His sacrifice. (Hebrews 9:12; 10:10; 1 Peter 1:18-20)

TO WORSHIP THE SAVIOR

In the Lord's Supper, we humbly and reverently worship Him who is the only one worthy to receive all the glory and honor, anticipating that heavenly adoration in which we will one day participate. (Revelations 5:1-14)

TO CELEBRATE OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

In the Lord's Supper, we celebrate our unity with Christ. The communion of the redeemed with their Redeemer is an intimate and live communion. (1 Corinthians 6:17; John 6:48-58; Galatians 2:20; John 15:1-11)

TO CELEBRATE OUR BROTHERLY FELLOWSHIP

Also in the Lord's Supper we celebrate because all the believers are ONE in Christ. Participating in the same bread and drinking of the same cup, we are all acknowledging that we are a UNITY. (John 17: 3; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:3-6)

TO ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF OUR SAVIOR

By eating the Passover Iamb, the Israelites announced, or declared to their children of their liberation from slavery by the blood of this Iamb. In the same way, in the Lord's Supper, as we are "eating" "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), we are announcing and proclaiming His death as the only means of expiation and salvation for all humanity. (Read 1 Corinthians 11:26.) Participating in the Lord's Supper is a great blessing for our lives. It is a special moment of worship and fellowship with the Savior and with the brethren.

BASIC DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS

- 1. ATTEND SERVICES** (Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 18:20; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:13; Acts 2:43-47) Except for sickness, work, or travel, the believer should not miss any services in his church. The duty, then, is to attend services; but not simply attend, but also PARTICIPATE. In the services we are not spectators, but rather participants. We must take part singing with enthusiasm and joy; praying when a voluntary prayer is solicited, and sharing when asked or given the opportunity to do so. (Psalm 22:22; 2 Timothy 1:7-8)
- 2. SUPPORT THE CHURCH**
 - ◆ Spiritual support: Praying for each of the fellow believers, disciples and unconverted; for sanctification; for the pastor; sermons; Bible studies, etc.; for the youth; the Sunday School and all other ministries the church is involved in. You must serve also with your spiritual gifts.
 - ◆ Material support: Regularly offering a percentage of our income for the maintenance and growth of the church; making available any and all of our personal goods that might be useful in Christ's cause. (Example: vehicle, house, tools, furniture, etc.; Read 1 Chronicles 29:9, 16-18.)
 - ◆ Physical support: Give our body as a living sacrifice to the Lord's service in whatever is necessary. (Romans 12:1, 11)

THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH

There are four basic purposes of the church:

1. TO WORSHIP
2. TO EVANGELIZE
3. TO BUILD UP
4. TO SERVE

FIRST PURPOSE: TO WORSHIP

TO WORSHIP means to give reverence to a being with high honor and respect.

The church exists to worship God. We worship God because we have understood, believed and accepted that HE IS GOD! HE IS THE ONLY GOD! We worship Him because we must do so, but we also worship Him because we love Him!

TWO SIDES OF WORSHIP

The authentic worship that God deserves, and the only that He receives, includes two forms that the Bible describes using two words: WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

Although these terms seem to be synonymous, being that to worship God is to serve Him, and to serve Him is to worship Him, the original words show the following difference:

WORSHIP: Bow down (Greek "proskuneo:) Matthew 14:33

To worship means to bow down or kneel before God in an attitude of deep humility and reverence before His greatness. (Read 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 95:6; 96:9.)

In order for the physical act of WORSHIP honor God, it must be done with the whole heart. (John 4:23)

This aspect of worship includes:

- ◆ Prayers (Example of a prayer of worship: 1 Chronicles 29:11-13)
- ◆ Praises or songs. (Psalms 95, 96, 100; Ephesians 5:19)
- ◆ Offerings. (Read 1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Corinthians 9:7.)

SERVICE: Serve (Greek "latreia") Romans 12:1-2

Service means service and obedience to God. The Greek word "latreia" used here by Paul meant at that time, the voluntary service that a slave or salaried worker gave his owner or employer. Back then, the slaves honored their owners bowing before them as a sign of respect and submission, but also doing all that their lords ordered them to do. We, as "slaves" of the Lord, must do exactly the same: worship Him in our prayers, songs, offerings, bowing down before His greatness (you can worship also without kneeling), and above all else, worshipping Him by living a holy life before His eyes. Practicing truth, righteousness, honesty, purity, mercy and love at all times and in all places: in the workplace, in school, in our neighborhood, in the home, in the church!

RESULTS OF WORSHIP (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Worship transforms us! Our worship does not transform God. God is no better, no more holy, more just, more perfect, or greater because the church worships Him. But the church ITSELF is sanctified and made perfect through worship. Isaiah was sanctified through worship. Worship purifies us; it enriches us spiritually; it changes us. (Read 2 Corinthians 3:18.)

BE A TRUE WORSHIPER!

To worship is one of the purposes of God for His church. Therefore, WORSHIP GOD! Start to worship the Lord in your home. Kneel down and worship the Almighty with your prayers and praises. Go to church and worship the Lord with the congregation. Live each day in an attitude of reverence before God, living a holy life. For who God IS and for what He DID IN CHRIST, for our salvation, the church worships Him and will worship Him for all eternity! (Revelations 4:1-11; 5:9-14)

SECOND PURPOSE: TO EVANGELIZE

This is the GREAT PURPOSE of the church regarding the world. This is THE MISSION of the church. The church exists to evangelize the world. (Read Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20.)

JESUS, THE FIRST EVANGELIST

The church exists, thanks to evangelization. Jesus was the first evangelist. Jesus left heaven and came to this world as a missionary. He won the first twelve. Later Jesus and those twelve reached others.

THE APOSTLES OBEYED THE COMMANDMENT

When Jesus returned to heaven, He gave His disciples the clear commandment: "*GO AND PREACH THE GOSPEL. . .*" And so it was that after the Holy Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost, (Acts 2) that the apostles, faithfully obeying the Lord's commandment, preached the Gospel and 3,000 people were converted. The church was born.

THE CHURCH ALSO OBEYED THE COMMANDMENT

Not only the apostles, but all the Christians of the early church knew that the purpose of the church was to win the lost. So they went out, carrying the Gospel of salvation to every creature.

(Read Acts 8:1, 4-5; 5:42.)

THINK ABOUT IT...

What would have happened if the early church would not have obeyed the commandment to go and preach the Gospel? The church would not exist today! But the church WENT and PREACHED! That's why the church of Christ is present today in all nations, thanks to the evangelistic work of the believers. At any rate, the evangelistic work isn't done. There are still millions that must hear the Gospel; "*and how shall they hear without a preacher?*" (Romans 10:14)

FOUR MOTIVATING FACTORS TO EVANGELIZATION

1. THE CALL FROM ABOVE (Mark 16:15-16)

God determined to save the world through the preaching of the church (1 Corinthians 1:21). To spread the Gospel is undeniably the duty of the church. Don't expect a special calling to go out and evangelize, because you already have it in the Bible. Jesus commanded you to GO and to PREACH. WILL YOU DO IT?

2. THE CALL FROM BELOW (Luke 16:19-31)

In this dramatic story, Jesus paints a dark picture of what happens in the invisible world after death. Without entering into speculations about every detail of this story, let's look at some important facts:

- ◆ When a person without Christ dies, his soul goes to a place of torment. (Luke 16: 23-24)
- ◆ Human beings retain their conscience upon dying. They know who they are, what they did, and what awaits them. (Luke 16:27-30)
- ◆ After death, *nothing, and no one* can change man's eternal destiny. (Luke 16:26)

- ◆ The lost (in torment), discovering that they have no possibility of being saved, begin to worry about their dear ones who are still living, and cry out for someone to go and preach the Gospel to them so that they repent and don't end up in the same place as they.
(Luke 16:27-28)

Dear believer: Do you hear the call from below? Listen to the cry of the lost that are in torment! They are calling for you to go preach to those "five brothers." How else will they be able to repent and be saved if not through *your preaching*? (Luke 16:29)

You are saved! GLORY TO GOD! But what about your family? What about your friends and acquaintances? What about your co-workers?

Think about this: All of your loved ones, all of your friends and acquaintances in general, everyone that surrounds you, will go to hell if they don't repent and accept the Lord Jesus as their Savior before they die. Now, are you responsible for their being saved? NO. But you ARE responsible for their hearing the Gospel! Don't be indifferent to the call from below! (Read Proverbs 24:11-12 and Revelations 20:12-15)

3. THE CALL FROM OUTSIDE (Acts 16:6-10)

This extraordinary, one-time, and touching vision motivated the Apostle Paul to leave right away for Macedonia with the message of salvation. This man from Macedonia appeared in a vision representing all of the inhabitants of the region of Macedonia. His plea indicated how much the people needed the Lord.

HELP US! Is the call from outside.

HELP US! Is the same call that modern man makes to the believer, the only one who can help.

HELP ME! Is the silent cry of so many that are around us.

Dear believer, don't wait till you have a vision like Paul did to realize what tremendous spiritual need people you meet every day have. Simply open your eyes, look around you and see how these people live: without peace, without assurance, without hope, slaves to sin, seeking the answer to their dilemmas in pleasure, materialism, religion, etc. Far from finding what they are searching for, they sink deeper and deeper in sin and despair. Notice the alarming increase in suicide and depression in our times. In the meantime, you and I know what the solution is: JESUS CHRIST!

What will you do? Have compassion on the lost, and take the message of salvation to them. Many will reject it, but others will believe and will be eternally thankful to you for having shown them the way to the Savior! (Read Matthew 9:36, 38; Romans 10:14-15.)

4. THE CALL FROM INSIDE (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

The Apostle Paul had a deep love for the lost in his heart that constrained him (caused him to move in spite of resistance to evangelize. In reality he said: "*the love of Christ constraineth us. . .*" Meaning that because of love, Christ was impelled to leave His heavenly throne to come to this sinful world and shed His blood to rescue us. That same love was shed in the heart of the apostle by the Holy

Spirit, which motivated him to reach out to the lost. (Romans 5:5; 9:3; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22)

Dear friend: the Holy Spirit also lives in you and the love of Christ was also shed in your heart. Don't you feel impelled in your heart to win the lost? ... Allow the Spirit to show this love through your life. Pray and consecrate yourself to the Lord's service.

THIRD PURPOSE: TO BUILD UP

The third purpose of the church is to build up. The church exists to build; but NOT to build houses or buildings, BUT human lives. Here we are dealing with spiritual building.

WHAT DOES BUILDING UP SPIRITUALLY MEAN?

It means spiritual growth (see Lesson 3). Building up spiritually has to do with the development of Christ-like virtues in the believers until he/she reaches maturity in Him. Spiritual building up has to do with the sanctification we learned about in Lesson 6 and with the necessary preparation so that the believer enjoys this abundant life of freedom, joy, peace, and service to the Lord.

THE CHURCH: A BUILDING IN CONSTRUCTION

One of the figures that the Bible uses to refer to the church is that of a house or a temple in construction (Read Ephesians 2:20-22). When Paul wrote this, he had the temple in Jerusalem in mind, which was an example of what the church of the Lord would be one day. The apostle, taking this figure, teaches us that the church is like a temple built on an unmovable foundation: JESUS CHRIST! Brick after brick are added upon this foundation, until the building is completed. The Apostle Peter calls the believers "living stones" (Read 1 Peter 2:4-5) and exhorts them to be built up individually and together. The church is very much involved in building you up spiritually, and you have a lot to do with building up the church. God's will is that we be builders and built up at the same time.

HOW THE CHURCH BUILDS AND IS BUILT UP

THROUGH CHRIST: (Read Matthew 16:18)

Jesus Christ is the Engineer, the Foreman on the job, and the One who provides the materials, the workers, and the blessing!

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it..." (Psalm 127:1)

THROUGH THE PASTORS: (Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:12)

God calls and prepares certain men to edify the church through teaching the Word of God. Appreciate the work that pastors, teachers, preachers and those who disciple, do for the building up of the church. (Read Hebrews 13:7, 17; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17) Don't miss any service. God wants to build you up a little more in each sermon and each Bible study. Allow the Heavenly Builder continue working in you. (Read Philippians 1:6.)

THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP: (Read Matthew 28:19-20)

The church builds up the saved in what we call "discipleship". Discipleship is the process by which a mature, experienced Christian helps a new convert in his first steps in faith, teaching him basic spiritual truths, and how to apply them to his daily life; cooperating in his spiritual development until he reaches maturity in Christ.

You are in this process right now. You are learning to live as a true disciple of Christ. That's why this discipleship course was prepared, and you were assigned a mature Christian to disciple you. Are you following the advice of your mentor? Are you sincere with him/her? The person who is disciplining you is there to help you and build you up. Open your heart and tell him what you feel, what is happening; your trials, fears, struggles, failures, etc. He loves you and wants to build you up. Trust him! (2 Timothy 2:2)

THROUGH BROTHERLY FELLOWSHIP: (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

The church builds and is built up through brotherly fellowship. This aspect is so important that the New Testament is full of exhortations to practice it. Writing to the Romans, Paul exhorted them saying:

*"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace,
and things wherewith one may edify another." (Romans 14:19)*

This building up, then, is reciprocal; I dedicate myself to building up my brother, and my brother dedicates himself to building me up.

As an example, let's imagine two brothers. Each of them is building his house. One day Art helps Bob with his construction, and the next day, Bob gives Art a hand on his building. Spiritually speaking, all the believers have the responsibility of helping others in their spiritual growth. We must build up our fellow believers and not destroy them. (Romans 15:2; Ephesians 4:29)

BUILDING UP ONE ANOTHER

The following is a partial list of our duties towards one another:

- ◆ In honor, prefer one another (Romans 12:10)
- ◆ Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- ◆ Receive (accept) one another (Romans 15:7)
- ◆ Admonish one another (Romans 15:14)
- ◆ Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- ◆ Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
- ◆ Put up with one another (Colossians 3:13)
- ◆ Forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
- ◆ Edify one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- ◆ Exhort one another (Hebrews 10:25)

As you can see, building up one another is very practical.

You build up the church when you fulfill these duties.

THE CHURCH IS BUILT UP IN LOVE (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Writing to the Ephesians, Paul emphasizes that the growth or edification of the church as a whole is produced in LOVE. He said to the Corinthians that love edifies (1 Corinthians 8:1) and he exhorted the Colossians saying:

"And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness." (Colossians 3:14)

Love builds up because it is the perfect bond. How is a building constructed? Not only with bricks and blocks, but also with cement.

LOVE IS THE "CEMENT" OF THE CHURCH

In the church, as in a building, the people are not just together, but rather united by the perfect bond, LOVE. Just as cement makes thousands of loose bricks become ONE, and all of them make up a BUILDING, the love of God that has been shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that was given unto us, enables us as children of God to fulfill our mutual duties, building each other up, and experiencing unity in the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

Many believers testify that what brought them to the Lord was the love that they saw in the church and that they received from the believers. (Read John 13:34-35). Many who come to church, come with broken lives. There are those who have received nothing other than all types of abuse, rejection, and hate. As adults, they believe that they aren't worth anything and that no one loves them.

Continuing on in the same verse, we read: *"... especially unto them who are of the household of faith."* Observe here that the family of the faith, referring to the church, is first. Nevertheless, the unconverted are not excluded. Quite to the contrary, the recommendation is to *"do good unto all men."* Read also Proverbs 3:27-28.

ATTITUDES OF A SERVANT

We must serve the Lord with joy and from the heart. (Colossians 3:22-24)

We must serve Him with diligence and enthusiasm. (Romans 12:11)

We must serve Him with excellence.

We must serve Him sincerely. (Matthew 6:1-4)

We must always be willing to serve. (1 Timothy 3:1)

LESSON 10: QUESTIONS

1. The church belongs to _____ and was founded by _____.
2. What are the requirements to become a member of the church? _____

3. Is it correct to think that a person can belong to Christ, but not belong to a local church and be active in it? _____. Using the passage of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, explain your answer.

4. Who should the church be subject to, and why? _____

5. Who did God place in the congregation as the leader, and what should be the member's attitude towards him? _____

6. According to Ephesians 5:25, how should each believer love the church? _____

7. Why is it important that each member function? _____

8. What should the fellowship among the believers be like? _____

9. Why is discipline in the church necessary? _____

10. Explain the difference between private discipline and public discipline. _____

11. List three reasons for discipline in the church.

12. What are the four purposes of the church?

13. In your own words, explain the results of worship.

14. The great purpose of the church regarding the world is:

15. Who is responsible for building up the church?

16. How is the church built up and how does it build up? Explain in your own words.

17. What are some of the duties the believers have towards one another?

18. What are some of the attitudes a servant must have?

CONCLUSION

Dear fellow believer:

Being that you have finished this course, we hope that it has served its purpose, and that by now you are living the ABUNDANT, VICTORIOUS LIFE, YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST!!

If there is something that you have not understood, or if you have problems in putting what you've learned into practice, ask the person who discipled you for additional help.

Don't stop here! Continue growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ each day. Continue acquiring knowledge of God's Word. Keep enriching yourself spiritually in your NEW LIFE IN CHRIST, and you will bring forth many precious fruits for God's glory!