Men of Grace & Granite

JERRY WRAGG

Table of Contents

SERIES 1—DEVELOPING COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN
Study 1 Foundational Convictions 1
Study 2 Discipleship 7
Study 3 The Raw Materials 11
Study 4 Making Granite out of Clay 14

SERIES 2—THE MAN OF GOD
Study 1 A Man of Prayer 16
Study 2 A Man Who Flees Temptation 20
Study 3 A Man Who Fears the Lord 23
Study 4 A Man of Humility 25
Study 5 A Man of Contentment 29
Study 6 A Man of Honesty 32
Study 7 A Man of Moral Purity 35
Study 8 A Man Who Treasures Christ 38
Study 9 A Man Who Speaks the Truth 42

SERIES 3—PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
Study 1 How Should We "Do" Ministry? 46
Study 2 Church for His Glory 51
Study 3 The Peril of Manufacturing Growth 55

SERIES 4—UNITY IN LEADERSHIP
Study: Bringing Unity to Divided Leadership 58

SERIES 5—HERMENEUTICS
Study: An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics 64

SERIES 6—EXPOSITORY PREACHING
Study 1 Delivering Clear and Compelling Sermons 66
Study 2 The Challenges of an Expository Ministry 71
Study 3 Problems with Contemporary Methods 76
Study 4 The Power of the Word in Expository Preaching 82

SERIES 7—SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 1 The Family That God Blesses 83
Study 2 Reversing the Curse in Marriage 85
Study 3 Cultivating Forgiveness in the Home 88
Study 4 Peacemaking in the Home 92
Study 5 The Heart of Anger 97
Study 6 Fathers in the Home 100

Table of Contents

SERIES 8—BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Study 1 The Building Blocks for Counseling and Discipling Others....107
Study 2 An Apologetic for Biblical Soul Care....109
Study 3 Sanctification: Becoming Like Christ....115
Study 4 Becoming a Mature Disciple-Maker....124

SERIES 9—EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY
Study 1 Abiding and Pruning Result in the Fruit of the Spirit....127
Study 2 The Fundamental Motives for Service in the Church....133
Study 3 A Call to Faithfulness in Serving....138
Study 4 Biblical Categories of Gifts....142
Study 5 Maxing Out in Our Service for the Church....146

SERIES 10—MIRACULOUS GIFTS ARE NOT FOR TODAY....150
Sections
History Shows That Miraculous Gifts Have Ceased
History of Continuationism
History of Cessationism
The Modern "Gift" of Prophecy Is Different Than the Biblical Gift
The Modern "Gift" of Tongues Is Different Than the Biblical Gift
The Modern "Gift" of Healing Is Different Than the Biblical Gift
Paul Taught That the Gifts End During the Church Age
Apostles and Prophets Were Foundation, Not Perpetual
Signs, Wonders, and Miracles Confirm Divine Revelation

SERIES 11—THE DANGERS OF FALSE TEACHERS
Study 1 Know Your Enemy....169
Study 2 The Infiltration of False Teachers....172
Study 3 Errors and Tactics of False Teachers....177
Study 4 Word of Faith and the Prosperity Gospel....181

SERIES 12—A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY....186
Sections
Introduction
Ancient Christianity
Medieval Christianity
Modern Christianity

SERIES 13—CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE
Study 1 Which Church Is God's Will for Me?....241
Study 2 Corporate Church Discipline....251

Table of Contents

SERIES 14—DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE
Study: Divorce and Remarriage 259

SERIES 15—THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH
Study: The Role of Women in the Church 265

SERIES 16—GODLY BALANCE FOR WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRIES
Study: Godly Balance for Music and Worship Ministries 270

SERIES 17—CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 1 The Principle of Imitation in the Church 276
Study 2 Elder Character Mandates 281
Study 3 Shepherding Mandates 287
Study 4 Choosing Men Full of Faith and the Holy Spirit 290
Study 5 What Is a Shepherd, Elder, and Overseer? 295

APPENDIX
Navigating the Gray Areas of Life 300
The Role of the Holy Spirit in Interpretation 304
Hermeneutical Analysis Template 306
Ungodly Dating Relationships: How to Avoid Getting Stung 307

MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 1: DEVELOPING COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN
Study 1: Foundational Convictions

The purpose of this series is to drive home foundational convictions. These convictions are what help give men the courage to stand on the truth and vigorously apply it in their lives. Furthermore, this portion of the training is intended to help men build a stronger commitment to the bride of Christ, the church.

Bible passages for study:

2 Pet 1:3	1 Pet 1:23	John 5:24	John 17:17
Ps 19	Ps 119:11	1 Pet 3:15	Josh 1:8
2 Tim 2:2	Acts 20	2 Tim 1:12–18	2 Tim 1:12–18
Titus 1:9	Rom 12:1–3	John 8:68	2 Tim 3:14
1 Cor 3:5–9, 4:1–5	Dan 3–4	1 Cor 4:2–5	Ps 75:6–7
Col 1:10	2 Tim 4:3	Ezra 7:10	Ps 15
Matt 23:5–12	Luke 18:13	Phil 2:5–8	Isa 66:2
Ps 31:23	Phil 2:1–4	1 Pet 4	2 Cor 10:5ff.
Eph 6	1 Tim 4:1–2	Prov 1:1–7	

1. Have a working biblical literacy.

a) Understanding the broad categories of systematic and biblical theology: Bibliology, Theology Proper, Christology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, Soteriology, Eschatology, Angelology, Apologetics, etc.

Suggested resource: R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010).

b) Knowing in your Bible where specific passages speak to specific issues (2 Pet 1:3)

i) This is not merely an academic exercise. This is not merely data dissemination: the church must be continually grounded in a love for the truth so that they know how to put feet to their theology.

ii) You must believe it (1 Pet 1:23).

iii) You must know doctrine and be able to build others up with it. Someday your kids will need to know truth and you need to be able to give them truth (Eph 4:7–12). "Your word is truth" (John 17:17; cf. 5:24; Ps 19).

iv) Memorize it (Ps 119:11). Be ready to make a defense for it (1 Pet 3:15).

v) Meditate on it (Josh 1:8).

c) Be alert to the challenges of a digital age.

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i) Never in the history of the church has there been such an expectation for an immediate response to any kind of communication.

ii) Text, email, and phone all demand our time.

iii) We don't sit and ponder truth as the Puritans once did.

iv) Biblical insights and discernment are cultivated by pondering truth and its implications from every angle as to the implications for our heart and conduct. John MacArthur has said, "You need to be able to say things that are transcendent."

v) As you ponder, meditate upon, and yield to truth, insights into the human heart and spiritual realities begin to emerge with piercing clarity.

vi) You must be an expository listener on Sundays, pondering, confessing, yielding, and worshiping.

vii) Do you sit down to think through the implications from sermons?

(1) Look at a principle in Scripture and say, "How does this implicate my life?" "How must my inner life change in light of this principle?"

(2) External change follows inner life change.

2. Have a right perspective of leadership.

a) We must avoid viewing leadership as organization, event planning, or mobilizing large groups of people.

b) We must cling to the Scriptures.

i) Meticulously and faithfully pass the Scriptures on to others (2 Tim 2:2).

ii) Paul "did not shrink from declaring … the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27).

iii) You must be able to pass on the gospel (2 Tim 1:12–18).

iv) You must be able to refute error (Titus 1:9).

3. Apply the Word to life's hardest questions.

a) Take the truth and work it out practically.

b) Begins by renewing the mind (Rom 12:1–2)

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i) True change must happen at the heart level. Before we can make practical applications of truth to our conduct, we must look at how the truth implicates our unbiblical thoughts, desires, affections, emotions, and will.

ii) When we rush to make outward applications, we undermine our spiritual renewal by focusing on changes in mere behavior. Moreover, one individual's personal application of Scripture may be a necessary outward change for them but not for all others. In fact, our personal applications of biblical principles have no inherent authority. Only the truth is objective and divinely authoritative.

iii) Some key "implication" questions are as follows:

– How does the truth confront my will?

– What idolatries of the heart (Ezek 14:1–8) must I confess and forsake?

– Are there unholy motivations ruling me?

– Is there an unbiblical or heretical thought pattern?

This helps people see from the Scripture *why* they do what they do. And it helps people see God's perspective in every situation.

4. Know how to help others develop convictions.

a) Convictions are beliefs which drive your life and for which you would die if circumstances demanded.

b) The longer you confront your inner thoughts with truth and yield to it, the more the mind of Christ will become the foundation and fruit of your convictions.

c) Biblical convictions will cost your reputation with friends, your influence, and family relationships. But like Peter, we say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

d) Convictions help you take stands and have courage in hard seasons. To be convinced is to be convicted (2 Tim 3:14).

5. Have a right perspective of oneself.

a) "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ" (1 Cor 4:1; cf. 3:5–9).

b) Know that God can, for His greater glory, minimize or maximize our usefulness at any time (Dan 3–4; cf. Ps 75:6–7).

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c) We should never take ourselves too seriously; we are merely slaves who believe, and stewards of what belongs to God (Luke 17:10; 1 Cor 4:2).

d) We should realize that God is the ultimate examiner of motives (1 Cor 4:3–5).

6. Have a right perspective of longevity.

a) Teach others to stay at it. Be faithful for the long term (2 Tim 2:2ff.)!

i) Don't fall for fads and gimmicks.

ii) Don't believe Satan's lies concerning perceived influence.

iii) Stay away from the love of money that can come with influence.

7. Have a right perspective of influence.

a) Men must not measure influence in the church at a superficial level.

i) We can't evaluate it by numbers or perceived influence. Such external and often fluctuating dynamics are not a reliable measure of God-blessed ministry (2 Tim 4:3).

ii) Second Timothy 4:3–4 says that "the time will come when … [churches] will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." If we define a "successful" ministry merely by attendance and popular opinion, how will we ever know for certain that Paul's warning here has come to pass? In other words, if "the church" is always claiming success "by the numbers," then she will never become aware that she has merely "accumulated teachers" according to the popular vote.

iii) And if audience approval makes particular teachers popular, the church will always assume that "God is blessing" gifted teachers and spiritually hungry people. But superficial evaluations such as church size and popularity are no affirmation of God's blessing. It may be merely the result of good old-fashioned consumerism. Audiences may crowd an auditorium but desire shallow sermons by clever communicators. And teachers may assume great giftedness and blessing given the crowds that follow, but their shallow preaching delivers the pablum crowds already desire.

b) All true spiritual influence flows from godly character.

i) Men must have integrity in their hearts (Ps 15:1–5). The force and credibility of a man's influence is directly related to how consistently he strives after godliness when no one else is around.

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– Who you are when no one is watching but Christ is who you really are, and nothing more. Integrity means being the same person on the inside that we are on the outside.

ii) All godly character flows from a life of humility and faith.

(1) Contrast Matthew 23:5–12 from Luke 18:13!

(2) We deserve nothing. Salvation is a gift. When we see ourselves rightly we respond rightly (Phil 2:5–8)!

(3) God uses those who are cultivating particular character qualities on a consistent basis. He looks "to those who are humble, contrite of heart, and who tremble" when they learn the truth of His Word (Isa 66:2).

iii) Genuine humility and faith are measured by faithfulness to Christ.

(1) Perseverance in holy striving (Ps 31:23)

(2) Loyalty to Christ in all circumstances (Phil 1:20)

(3) Trustworthiness in the stewardship of serving the Lord (1 Cor 4:2)

c) What matters supremely is that men know the truth, live the truth, proclaim the truth, and disciple others in the truth.

i) True ministries are committed to Bible exposition, leadership development, shepherding, discipleship, holy living, and a biblical philosophy of ministry.

ii) Ezra 7:10 must be the mantra of a man's heart. The order is deliberate: study; practice; teach.

iii) In the development of leadership within the body of Christ, it is God alone who gives the influence (1 Cor 3:7), and He alone determines the scope and breadth.

8. Have a grasp of practical ministry.

a) Take a self-inventory:

– Where do you serve, and how are you serving the body?

– Are you involved in a Bible study?

– Are you encouraging friendships?

– Are you discipling anyone?

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– Are you being discipled?

– Are you in the flow of ministry life learning about others' lives?

– Do you sacrifice you time, energy, and resources to serve others?

– Do you pray for others?

b) You need to be using your gifts (even if you're not completely sure how), and get busy about serving (1 Pet 4:9–11).

9. Be a student.

a) Be a student of the times.

i) Be a student of:

– today's prevailing error (2 Cor 10:5ff.; Eph 6:10–12; 1 Tim 4:1–2).

– today's place in church history.

– today's particular need (2 Tim 3:1ff.).

ii) Be a student of the truth so that you are able to persuade men from Scripture (Acts 17:16–34).

b) Be a student of tested principles.

– the principles of the fear of the Lord and of wisdom (Prov 1:1–7)

– the principles in Ecclesiastes ("vanity," chasing the wind)

– the patterns of disciplined habits

– the practice of critical thinking

"If your character determines the power of your ministry, then your knowledge determines the stability of it."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 1: DEVELOPING COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN
Study 2: Discipleship

The purpose of this series is to drive home foundational convictions. These convictions are what help give men the courage to stand on and apply the truth in their lives. Furthermore, this portion of the training is intended to help men build a stronger commitment to the bride of Christ, the church.

Bible passages for study:

Matt 28:18–20	Phil 3:17	1 Cor 4:16	1 Cor 11:1
Titus 2:7	1 Tim 4:12	Rom 14:19	2 Tim 2:4
Rom 12:1–2	2 Tim 2:2	1 Tim 4:6, 11	1 Cor 2:5
Gal 6:1	1 John 2:15–17	Heb 3:12–13	1 Pet 5:5
Isa 66:2	Phil 3:12–16	Col 1:28–29	John 16:8

Matthew 28:18–20 is the mandate of every Christian. This is where we develop our doctrine of discipleship.

Discipleship is not optional. All are called to disciple—that is, we must teach what Jesus taught and instruct them to obey Him.

Four reasons why Christians struggle to help people grow in discipleship:

1. Ignorance

    a) People don't know it's a mandate.

    b) People overcomplicate their view of it.

    c) People think it is a specialized area for the professionals.

2. Reticence

    a) Selfish use of time

    b) Hesitant

    c) Fearful

    d) Too self-aware to serve others

    e) Busying their life with other things

3. Indifference

    a) They don't really care.

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b) They are not sure it matters much.

4. Disobedience

a) They have a general sense of what to do but choose not to do it.

b) They have been taught it clearly from the Scriptures but refuse to do it.

Discipleship relationships often begin and flourish in a variety of circumstances, but all effective discipleship is undergirded by four essential elements:

1. Imitation—influencing others by the way you live and by the proactive teaching of the truth

a) What imitation means (Phil 3:17; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1)

i) Imitation does not mean following a man as if he has inherent authority in and of himself.

ii) It does mean imitating the teaching and living that aligns with Christ.

b) This requires that you have a credible life.

i) That the discipler is living a holy and compelling life worth following (1 Tim 4:12). The discipler is in the war against sin and gaining victory. This allows him to mentor others while having credibility (2 Tim 2:4).

ii) You can never take them further or deeper than what you are willing to live.

iii) The disciplee is not giving way to the temptation to be threatened, lazy, fearful, or resistant, but is willing to step out in faith and latch on to his discipler as a model for godly living (Phil 3:17).

c) Essentially, this means helping people become more like Christ and less like the world (Rom 14:19; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7).

2. Renovation—the passionate pursuit of answers

a) A complete overhaul of your reasoning (Rom 12:1; 1 Tim 4:6, 11; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 2:1–6)

b) This simplifies discipleship—you are helping others find areas where their minds need to be renovated, and teach them to observe all that Jesus commands them (Matt 28:20).

c) Ask questions to see how people think about Christ, truth, ethics, the world, the kingdom, work, sin, marriage, etc. Then help them see what needs to change in their reasoning.

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Areas of flawed thinking needing change:

– God

– Christ

– Sin

– Ministry

– The ministry of the Spirit

d) Help them:

– develop new convictions as they learn how to reason.

– grow in discernment.

– identify lies they are believing.

e) We are "to teach" (*didáskō*, 2 Tim 2:2). We are not looking to opinionize or philosophize, or else we would violate 1 Corinthians 2:5 where Paul warns us not to have people's faith "rest on the wisdom of men."

f) We are to instruct with propositional truth from the Word of God so that the mind of God is implanted into disciples' thinking.

g) We are to do as Galatians 6:1 tells us: to restore and set people's thinking back in place for godly living.

3. Cultivation—staying in the process for the long haul

a) Be willing to cut personal time and your enjoyments to spend enough time with those you're discipling.

i) Be someone who is willing to set aside personal time to meet needs.

ii) Be willing to get involved in the process—even for the long haul when the messiness of sin is complicating everything.

b) When you are helping people, remember:

– They likely don't have a good sense of their spiritual maturity, stamina, or strength.

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– They are often blind to weakness, sin, laziness, pride, self-importance, and a host of other evil lusts (1 John 2:15–17). Hebrews 3:12–13 is clear that each person needs to be regularly receiving biblical instruction from objective sources outside themselves to keep them from unbelief and ultimate apostasy.

– Whether or not you are an elder, you should be teachable. First Peter 5:5 carries the key principle that submission to those over you cultivates humility.

– Resisting submission to a discipler when he is giving biblical counsel puts the disciplee in the camp of pride, and "God is opposed to the proud" (1 Pet 5:5). God does not look on the proud as someone who is interested in godly living (Isa 66:2).

4. Conformation—aiming to see Christ formed in them

a) The discipler should have goals in mind.

i) Not to recreate a better version of himself

ii) Not to cultivate convictions in his disciplee that he personally views as authoritative

iii) The discipler should have the desire to admonish and teach every man until they are complete in Christ (Col 1:28–29; Phil 3:12–16).

iv) The discipler should continually be faithful with the truth regardless of the response of the disciplee.

b) The discipler will be persuaded that only the Spirit of God can effect change in the disciplee (John 16:8). Any feeble attempt to manipulate change and push personal influence will only cause harm to the disciplee.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 1: DEVELOPING COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN
Study 3: The Raw Materials

The purpose of this series is to drive home foundational convictions. These convictions are what help give men the courage to stand on and apply the truth in their lives. Furthermore, this portion of the training is intended to help men build a stronger commitment to the bride of Christ, the church.

Bible passages for study:

2 Tim 2:2	Matt 25:14–29	Prov 28:13	1 Cor 3:5–19
1 Cor 12:14–27	Prov 4	Matt 7:1–5	Mark 10:44
Gal 6:1	Prov 11:14	Prov 19:20	Matt 18:21–35

It has been said that when looking for potential leaders we must find those who are available, devoted to Christ, and teachable. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:2 that leadership should be entrusted to the "faithful" and "able." Some basic premises:

– No one is irreplaceable.

– People do not always see their own potential.

– Leadership qualities surface with leadership opportunities.

– Maturity and skill are developed through experience.

– The best in people emerges when they know they are being counted upon.

We look for the following qualities in men. We are not looking for perfection, but we are looking for the raw materials. Even in raw form, they will be there.

1. Reliability and faithfulness in little tasks (Matt 25:14–29; Luke 16:10; 2 Tim 2:2)

The reliable and faithful person takes small responsibilities and turns them into effective progress.

– Sometimes it needs to be tested.

– You may uncover laziness, limitations, or lack of self-control.

– Testing identifies how much supervision is necessary.

2. Accepts responsibility for failures/mistakes

a) It has often been said, "Wherever God's grace is operative, human failure is never final."

b) No excuse-making/blameshifting

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c) Failure works to his advantage (Prov 28:13)

3. Team player (He doesn't see himself as the answer to every issue.) (1 Cor 3:5–19; 12:14–27)

a) Comfortable around other gifted/talented people

b) Able to praise the giftedness of others

4. Patient with the idiosyncrasies of others

a) Can work through difficult personality clashes (e.g., Paul and Barnabas)

b) Can tolerate the inadequacies of others

c) Can give people time to develop (Jesus waited patiently for disciples to develop).

5. Knows own limitations

a) Recognizes his own weaknesses

i) Staffs to his own weaknesses

ii) With patience, allows others succeed and fail so they may also learn and grow

b) Asks others to help for the common good

6. Able to graciously accept criticism

a) Doesn't carry personal baggage (Prov 4:23; Matt 7:1–5; 18:21–35)

– Most people need to grow to release personal baggage. This is especially true of leaders and would-be leaders.

b) Deep down, there should be a softness/gentleness (Gal 6:1).

7. Solution-focused rather than problem-focused

a) Uses good judgement (Prov 11:14)

b) Bad decisions can be avoided with teachability (Prov 19:20).

c) Able to assess challenges and find solutions—not a whiner and complainer

8. Enthusiastic and optimistic

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9. Enjoys serving people (Mark 10:44)

10. Trusted by close friends

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 1: DEVELOPING COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN
Study 4: Making Granite out of Clay

There is no disputing the fact that the church needs good, biblically-qualified leadership. A sound philosophy of ministry will always give attention to the need for leaders. Christ, as the Head of the church (Eph 1:22; 4:15), mediates His rule in the church through those called to spiritually lead (1 Thess 5:13–14; Heb 13:7, 17).

Bible passages for study:

Eph 2:1–3 Eph 5:1 2 Tim 2:2–3

Why does the church so often lack a strong force of men who know the truth and who will not compromise—"Men of Grace and Granite," as I like to call them! You're the shepherd. You've been trained. You are carrying the torch of ministry. You have the tools. You're striving to be faithful, but you can't seem to inspire that same courageous passion in the men around you.

Following are a few common reasons why it can be difficult to consistently raise up men in the church who will carry spiritual responsibility and be faithful.

1. The struggle with sin

a) Men are dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1–3).

b) Men lack personal holiness (Eph 5:1).

c) Men do not trust God in times of testing.

d) Men have neglected the spiritual nurturing of their families.

e) Men have not maintained a clear testimony for Christ in the world.

f) Men have not given their lives in service to the body of Christ. Paul speaks of training men in the same breath that he speaks about the "hardship" of ministry (2 Tim 2:2–3).

2. Great content without shepherding

a) You can't train others with merely a syllabus!

b) Many pastors try to train leaders by opening a fire hose of information with little or no hands-on work in the trenches applying what they know.

c) Inadequate modeling of truth-in-practice.

d) Preparing a world-class meal, but not eating and digesting it!

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3. Great shepherding without content

a) Some pastors find the relational part of discipleship very comfortable, but they take short cuts on the content.

b) Men need biblical answers, not opinions!

4. Lack of courage and perseverance

a) You start a leadership training regimen. You have a few enthusiastic recruits. You storm out of the gate, charging at full strength—but time demands, other burdens, unforeseen trials, etc. make it much more difficult.

b) The tendency is to slow down, to become inconsistent, and repeatedly unprepared. A man begins to allow discouragement to get a foothold. Some of the men drop off. You're down to two guys (sometimes just one), and you've lost your courage and passion.

5. Too much wasted effort

a) Pastors often do not discriminate between the serious and the half-hearted, between those who truly strive and those merely coast.

b) I want all the men in church, no matter what level of maturity, to be discipled.

c) But if I'm going to train strong leaders, I need to spend a focused amount of time working with a small core who will become the unshakeable nucleus.

d) It may start with just one man, but if he has the "raw materials," it's all we need.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 1: A Man of Prayer

This section deals with the great difficulty of remaining faithful in prayer during the Christian life. Consistent communion with God is a difficult discipline. Even those who have lived long enough to develop a certain pattern know that there are certain infirmities that can continue to plague their consistency. This lesson will help in personal examination to identify weaknesses in your own life that inhibit prayerful dependence on the Lord.

Bible passages for study:

Luke 5:16	Heb 11:6	Rom 8:26	Eph 6
Phil 1:9–10	2 Tim 2:1	Jas 4:3	Jude 20
Col 1:9–10	Col 4:2, 12–13	Ps 1:2	Col 2:1–13

It would not be an overstatement to say that everyone doesn't pray as they should. Perhaps you are not struggling in fervent prayer now, but you have before and you will again. This is, of course, due in part to our sinfulness, which still plagues us on a day-to-day basis. Even the most seasoned of saints will tell you of times when they know they have been neglectful in prayer.

What does prayer represent? Dependence. In prayer we have a growing understanding of our need to rely on the Lord for even the most seemingly "mundane" things. We can be quick to forget about our need for His grace and think that we can tackle the day in our own strength. We become self-reliant. When this happens, our prayer life suffers. We'll now look at several other hindrances that lead to a life that lacks prayer, followed by positive dispositions that should mark a Christian's life.

1. We must be aware of hindrances to a life of dependent prayer. (Spoiler alert: they all have to do with you!)

a) Lack of belief (Prayer is an act of faith.)

i) Must believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb 11:6)

ii) Must believe that God is there and interested in your prayer

iii) Must understand that His answer may not be what, when, or how you expect it

iv) Must believe that His answer is best

v) Must not depend on giving answers to every question we have, but cling to Him in faith

b) Lack of persistence

i) We are used to immediate responses in day-to-day life.

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(1) This is conditioned by culture and society.

(2) If we don't hear an immediate response, we cut off communication.

ii) Not receiving immediate responses gives us long-term needs to be prayerful over.

(1) God draws us to Himself in regular communion through our needs over which we pray continually.

(2) At times God does not give us what we ask for because we will spend it on ourselves (Jas 4:3).

c) Lack of preparedness

i) Distractions abound.

(1) New dynamics are thrown at you every day.

(2) The struggle now is more difficult than in years past.

(3) Technology, hobbies, etc. are not the problem—our hearts are.

(4) We love to be exposed to all sorts of things, but most of it is not helpful to the Christian life when unbalanced.

(5) We have altogether given up on meditation (Ps 1:2).

ii) Make the time you need.

(1) Christ is the model for prayer.

(2) Christ secluded Himself at times to pray (Luke 5:16).

2. We must work to cultivate the following dispositions toward God in prayer.

a) Readiness

i) Put on the armor of God (Eph 6).

(1) The armor is not meant to be merely contemplated.

(2) Be convicted by what the armor is and live by it.

(3) The armor protects you from temptation.

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ii) "Pray at all times in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18).

(1) There is a great readiness implied.

(2) Submissiveness to the Holy Spirit is expressed.

(3) We don't know how to pray as we ought. (Rom 8:26).

(4) Our weakest prayers are perfectly translated by the Holy Spirit.

(5) The Holy Spirit knows our hearts and weaknesses.

b) Devotion and alertness in prayer (Col 4:2)

– Philippians 1:9–10 offers a parallel idea. We need to petition God in prayer in order to prove what is excellent. This offers protection from sin, and failure here results in vulnerability and the lack of discernment.

i) We are too often self-reliant.

ii) We must be spiritually desperate.

iii) We need God's power, grace, and strength every day (Col 1:9).

iv) We need God's wisdom to walk worthy (Col 1:9–10).

(1) Every day we get up there's an opportunity for Satan to keep you from walking worthy.

(2) Sin crouches at the door threating atrophy in the Christian life.

c) Submissiveness and surrender

i) Prayer that is consistent with what you know about God and His will

ii) Prayer that seeks to be obedient to what God says

(1) This is a yieldedness to the Lord (Eph 6:18; Jude 20).

(2) You cannot be selfish in prayer.

(3) You cannot pray in the Spirit and be submissive if you have become stubborn against the truth.

(4) God wants our pride crushed.

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(5) God is patient, but determined.

(6) God may use circumstances/trials to bring about submissiveness.

– Trials test our theology regarding God's sovereignty.

– Trials drive us to prayer.

– Trials give us a great opportunity to grow in our faith and prayer.

d) Spiritual concern

i) We must cultivate a concern for what really matters: spiritual growth and maturity.

(1) Pray with a concern for others to stand complete (Col 4:12–13).

(2) Pray with the same intensity as Paul demonstrated (Col 2:1–10).

(3) Don't always pray for relief from the trial, but how you can grow through it.

(4) Know that tests and trials produce endurance.

ii) We must cultivate a concern for discernment (Phil 1:9).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 2: A Man Who Flees Temptation

In the Christian life, we know that explicit sin must be expunged as we grow in Christlikeness. But we must also be careful to manage what particular "portals" (or gateways) where temptation and sin can gain entrance into our lives. This section will deal with five particular areas. While not at all exhaustive, this study will give the man of God the opportunity to begin thinking critically about how to walk faithfully with the Lord.

Bible passages for study:

1 Cor 9:24–27	Prov 3:6	Prov 19:11	Matt 6:25
Luke 9:57–62	Luke 14:26	Phil 4	Col 3:1–4
1 Pet 1:13	1 Pet 3:9–12		

Areas of sin that will be examined through this section should not be looked at as compartmentalized. Sin in your life is like a web. Everything is interconnected on some level. While you may have consistent victory in one particular sin in your life, do not be so quick to think that failures in another will not make you more vulnerable where you already have victory.

As Paul writes to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, he says he "disciplines" his body. In the vernacular we might say, he "punches himself out" in order to make his body his slave, so that he will not be disqualified as a result of sin in his life. That being said, let's examine some of the most generic and common portals.

1. We must be aware of the tendency to fear or worry.

    a) Fear is connected to idolatries of time and personal gain.

    b) Fear is self-preservation (Matt 6:25–34).

        i) This can be life-consuming.

        ii) This results in pursuing things you are good at.

        iii) Spiritual priorities become muddied.

    c) Fear is a lack of trust in God's provision (Col 3:1–4).

    d) Fear leading to selfishness results in lack of concern for others (Phil 4).

2. We must be aware of our tendency to become inordinately attached to "things."

    a) This is the backside of what fear and anxiety produce in one's life.

    b) We must guard against being weighed down with them such that they rule our affections.

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i) This can be particularly difficult in our country.

ii) We've been blessed by God, but we must be discerning with our freedom and resources.

iii) The ruling affection of your heart must say, "The Lord can give or take."

c) Failure to do so will inhibit wise decision-making.

d) We must follow the example of Job—"Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10).

e) Christ must be our controlling affection (Luke 9:57–62).

f) Relational affections for anything cannot rival Christ (Luke 14:26).

3. We must guard against the temptation to become bitter or easily offended.

a) The Christian's tendency must be toward forgiveness (Prov 19:11).

b) When we don't forgive, it is a reflection of what is going on in our own spiritual life.

c) Bitterness as a Christian is like saying to Christ, "I want all of the benefits of the cross but I won't offer that to someone else."

d) Not only forgive, but also give blessing to those who offend you (1 Pet 3:9).

e) Carrying bitterness invites satanic deception and folly.

f) Carrying bitterness steals joy and peace (1 Pet 3:10–12).

i) You focus on human justice.

ii) You lose focus on God.

g) Bitterness not dealt with will erode convictions in other areas of your life.

h) Carrying bitterness will cause you to have to fight unnecessary battles in sanctification.

i) Being easily offended turns into personal baggage.

4. We must guard against a strong appetite for amusements.

a) This is a huge issue for young men in our culture (Prov 6:6–11; 19:15; 1 Tim 5:11–13; 2 Thess 3:6–8).

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b) Enjoying leisure is not inherently wrong.

c) The problem is loving it (Eccl 3:10; 4:5; 5:12; 10:18; 1 Cor 6:12).

i) It takes away from ministry time.

ii) It erodes sober-mindedness.

d) Real life is a spiritual war and it is serious (1 Pet 1:13).

e) How you guard your heart makes the difference.

5. We must guard against fear of man (Prov 29:25; Gal 2:11–13; Jas 1:9–11).

a) This is a concern over your own reputation.

i) That is the opposite of what Proverbs 3:6 says.

ii) Our greatest concern in the church should be the reputation of God.

b) There are times that your reputation may be criticized and it may be unjust, but there are plenty of other things they could have criticized and been right. They just picked the wrong thing.

c) It is an idolatry of your own significance.

d) You must be honest with the Lord and say, "What am I trying to portray to others? And is it even remotely what I truly strive to be or even remotely connected to the reality of my heart?"

e) Nothing will plague your godliness and ministry as a man and discipler of other men more than wanting to be "somebody" (Jas 3:16).

f) Can God shelve your ministry and you be okay with that?

Other Portals Requiring Examination

1. Idolizing family (You must love Christ more than your family.) (Luke 14:26–27; 2 Cor 6:14–15)

2. Intellectual pride (Jas 3:13–15)

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 3: A Man Who Fears the Lord

The purpose of this session is to help train men to develop a proper fear the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Man is finite, God is infinite. Discernment comes over time as we expose our minds to Scripture.

Bible passages for study:

Prov 9:10	Ps 111:10	Ps 51:5	Ps 145:3
Ps 139	Ps 78:1–8	Eph 5:10	Ps 128
Ps 1	Ezra 7:10	Ps 119	

1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10; Prov 9:10).

a) The fear of God always begins with the understanding of judgment.

i) God has a right to judge.

ii) Our judgment is warranted (Ps 51:5).

b) The fear of God means understanding our finiteness.

i) He is infinite, transcendent, and all-knowing (Ps 145:3).

ii) He is beyond our comprehension.

iii) Creation tells us of God's greatness.

iv) We have been fashioned by God (Ps 139).

(1) The psalmist is "blown away."

(2) God created mankind and we should be in awe of His marvelous works.

c) The fear of God must be passed on to our children (Ps 78:1–8).

i) Effective fathers always tell of God's greatness.

ii) This must be a practice in the home (while eating, talking, walking, standing, etc.).

iii) It must be generational.

(1) Did you speak of Christ?

(2) Did your children know of the works of God?

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(3) Did your grandchildren hear of what you talked about?

iv) Don't be like the example in Ps 78:8–11.

(1) They did not trust in God.

(2) They did not believe Him.

d) Practical aspects of the fear of God

i) Urgent to never displease God

ii) Searching out ways to always please Him (Eph 5:10)

iii) Psalm 15 shows a man who fears God.

2. A man is blessed if he fears the Lord (Ps 128).

a) To know God is to fear Him.

b) A blessed man stays away from all evil influences (Ps 1:1).

c) God looks to a specific kind of man.

i) Humble and contrite, and trembles at God's Word (Isa 66:2)

ii) He is a man of conviction.

iii) He stands by the Word of God regardless of the consequences (e.g., the Puritans and martyrs).

iv) He believes the truth and lives the truth (Ezra 7:10).

"Men fail in leadership because they do not fear the Lord enough. Then they do not pass it on to their children. Fearing the Lord means walking and standing in the fear of the Lord at all times."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 4: A Man of Humility

True biblical humility is absolutely counterintuitive to everything the world will throw at you to tell you how to get what you want out of life. In the race to satisfy earthly pleasures, moral and ethical rules quickly become bent and broken. This section will examine a biblical view of humility and what it means to cultivate that as a godly man.

Bible passages for study:

Ps 8	Eph 4:1–3	Phil 2:1–8	1 Pet 5:1–5
Isa 66:2	1 John 3:16–18	Hab 2:4	Dan 4

Pride has become a "throw-away" word within our culture. We are told that there are things that we should be proud of, whether it be race, heritage, our nation, etc. The fact is, as with any sin, it's very difficult to keep the lines clearly defined as to where "satisfaction" in something bleeds over into an area of pride. Pride is where the heart elevates itself over another person or people group. Pride is not something that should be common or comfortable to a Christian. Instead, we ought to be constantly digging up the roots of pride that have found a place to grow in our hearts.

The only way to truly serve the church is in humility. As we serve, we do so without any expectation of favors returned or even thanks. To cultivate a level of humility we offer our best work as tasks done as a privilege with the goal of modeling Jesus Christ. We know Christ "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). With this in mind we will examine several dimensions of cultivating humility.

1. We must understand the basis of unity (Eph 4:1–3).

    a) The Spirit of God builds unity into the body of Christ.

    b) Understand the character aspects of those who help promote unity:

        i) Humility

        ii) Gentleness

        iii) Patience

        iv) Tolerance (i.e., forbearance in love)

    c) We must be diligent to grow in those characteristics.

    d) This is particularly important to those who have been called to lead the church.

    e) We must imitate Paul as prisoners of the Lord.

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f) We are not our own; we are mere slaves (2 Cor 4:5).

g) We are mere servants who believe (1 Cor 3:4–9).

2. We must understand what humility is.

a) It's not that you think less about yourself; it's that you don't think about yourself at all.

b) It is the opposite of self-awareness and self-promotion.

c) It is regarding others as more important than yourself (Phil 2:1–8).

i) You should see everyone around you as an opportunity to serve at your expense.

ii) You should be lost in the needs of others (1 John 3:16–18).

(1) Walk alongside them in the Christian life.

(2) Bear their burdens (Gal 6:2).

(3) Serve regardless of social strata and personal differences.

3. We must understand why it's important.

a) Men are called to be leaders of the family.

b) Men are called to be leaders of the church (1 Pet 5:3).

i) Younger men are to be subject to elders (1 Pet 5:5).

ii) This type of submissiveness is difficult for young men.

iii) The younger you are, the more attentive you ought to be in practicing submissiveness.

c) Everyone is called to humility (1 Pet 5:5).

i) No one is excluded from the need to be humble as a Christian.

ii) It exhibits trust in God.

iii) The absence of humility means the presence of pride. God hates pride.

4. We must understand that true humility is the result of a right view of God and self (Ps 8).

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a) Pride comes from a sense of personal significance.

b) Having the view of God given in this text ought to squash any personal significance.

c) Our significance comes from how well we reflect Christ in our lives.

d) In order to see ourselves rightly, we must marinate our minds in the character of God.

5. Manifestations of humility/patience

– Submissiveness to the will of God

– Sensitivity to others

– Slow to anger, and willingness to wait

– Perseverance in doing what is right

– Longsuffering

– Not pushy

– Trusting God's purposes

– Trusting God to control circumstances

– Loving others without an exit strategy

6. Manifestations of pride/impatience

– Uncontrolled hostility toward others

– Harsh responses to others when expectations aren't met

– Bad temper

– Self-aware

– Fear of man

– Self-trust

– Worry

– Jealousy

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– Unwillingness to submit to the sovereign will of God in your life

– Pressuring others to conform to you

– Insisting on having your way

– Refusal to wait

– Not suffering under the purposes and promises of God

If we want God's favor:

1. We must cultivate humility because it draws God's gaze (Isa 66:2).

2. We must crush pride because it brings God's swift hand (Dan 4; 1 Pet 5:5).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 5: A Man of Contentment

The purpose of this session is to help train men to find contentment in Christ and Him alone. Contentment comes only when we find that Christ is our sole aim. When men have a differing doctrine of God, they lack the ability to find true contentment.

Bible passages for study:

1 Tim 6:6–11	Col 3:1–3	1 Cor 10:13	Prov 4
Gen 12–21	Rom 4:1–4	1 Tim 6:10	John 17:3
Rev 2:4	Ps 23	2 Tim 2:20	Titus 2:11–14
Eph 5:1	Phil 2:5–11	Ps 15	Phil 1:21

1. A godly man is content with where God has placed him in life.

    a) The things of the world are not his main concern.

    b) He earns them, yet does not focus on them.

    c) He sets his mind on things above (Col 3:1–3).

        i) Focusing on earthly things causes a loss of focus.

        ii) Men head down the wrong path.

        iii) Solomon warned his sons to keep the main things the main things (Prov 4).

2. A godly man pursues the things of God (2 Tim 2:20; Titus 2:11–14):

    – Faith

    – Righteousness

    – Godliness

    – Love

    – Patience

    – Gentleness

    – Crushing pride

    – Serving people

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3. A godly man runs away from earthly things:

– The dangers of discontentment

– Material wealth and its trappings

4. A godly man's main goal in life is Christ and becoming more like Him (Eph 5:1; Phil 1:21; 2:5–11).

a) Who you are when it's just you and Christ is who you really are.

b) Christ must be our highest aim and ambition (John 17:3; 2 Cor 5:9; Rev 2:4).

5. A godly man's family sees his godly desires lived out.

a) A wife needs a husband who leads her toward Christ.

b) Children need a father who leads them toward Christ.

i) They need to see their father stand up for Christ.

ii) A father without the courage to live for Christ is indirectly teaching his family that Christ is not worth standing for.

iii) They need to see their father push away earthly desires.

c) Children should see their father let God's sovereignty rule their lives.

i) They need to see their father trust God in all things.

ii) They need to see him walk humbly before Christ.

6. A godly man conforms his entire life to the will of God.

a) His faith is strong so that it cannot be moved (e.g., Abraham in Genesis and Romans 4:18–21).

b) His convictions are unbending (Ps 15).

c) A godly man remains faithful when trials come.

(1) God uses trials to stretch our faith.

(2) He wants us to be content with Him alone.

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(3) We will never learn contentment without being stretched in faith.

(4) The Shepherd never brings His children into unnecessary valleys (Ps 23).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 6: A Man of Honesty

Truth needs to be added to our mind through Scripture so that our consciences will be properly informed. The conscience is not the standard, but it is used by God to prick and prod us about what we know is true and what we say is true. When we don't ignore the truth of God in our life, we glorify God as we live for Him, and His truth shines through.

We ourselves cannot be the source to inform our own minds, because we do not know the truth apart from the Word of God. We suppress the truth that we know because we are fallen people. God does not dwell with those who displease Him. We are children of wrath by nature. The man who lives a life of integrity will never be shaken. He is consistent and he seeks to live a life that walks with God at the highest level.

Bible passages for study:

Ps 15	3 John	1 Pet 2:23	Prov 6:12–19
1 Cor 3:13	Matt 12:34	Jas 3:13–17	Prov 1:8
Phil 2:1–11	Ps 5:5	Mic 6:8	
Ps 32; 51; 73	Ps 119:97–104	Eph 4:20–23	

What is the heart of conduct that God can abide with?

1. God can abide with a man who walks with integrity.

    a) This is a fair and just man.

        i) He is fair, living with equity.

        ii) He is known for integrity and truth (Ps 15).

        iii) He understands how to treat people.

        iv) He seeks to bless others.

    b) He does not take advantage of people.

        i) The dishonest always seek their own advantage (Prov 6:12–19).

        ii) He does not take advantage of, or dominate, others.

        iii) He is not cruel.

        iv) He does not use his strengths as a hammer.

        v) He does not desire to gain from others illegally.

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c) He understands Who is in charge.

i) We are all worthy of God's judgment.

ii) We all will give an account (1 Cor 3:13).

2. God can abide with a man who works righteousness.

a) He is equitable with all.

b) He treats them as he would like to be treated.

c) He looks to help and not hurt.

3. God can abide with a man who speaks truth.

a) Truth-telling starts in your inner man (Matt 12:34).

b) His life matches what his mouth speaks.

c) He is consistent in all of his life dealings.

d) He is ethically just with all people.

e) He is known for honesty in his inner man.

4. God can abide with a man who is not slanderous.

a) Slander ruins others (Ps 15; Jas 3:13–17).

b) He does not ruin others by being deceitful.

5. God can abide with a man who does not do evil.

a) He is careful to treat others with love.

b) He hurts no one willfully and does not think of any way he can hurt people.

c) He does not retaliate when he has been hurt (1 Pet 2:23).

d) He is consumed by how Christ treated others (Phil 2:1–11).

6. God can abide with a man who does not take up a reproach.

a) He is a man who is careful when hearing news about others.

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b) He is known for avoiding unnecessary conflict (Prov 26:17).

c) He does not protect himself so he can hurt others.

d) He is a man who is not spiteful when others are hurting.

7. God can abide with a man who despises the reprobate (Ps 15).

a) He does not excuse evil in others.

b) He calls for God's character to be vindicated. (God's glory is his focus.)

c) He hates what God hates (Ps 5:5; Mic 6:8).

8. God can abide with a man who honors those who fear God.

a) He respects those who exalt God.

b) He praises those who love what God loves.

9. God can abide with a man who always walks in truth.

a) He is a man who self-indicts (Ps 32; 51; 73).

i) He admits his own guilt when necessary.

ii) He does not self-justify or minimize or rationalize his own behavior (Eph 4:20–24).

b) He is a man who is immovable in his integrity (Ps 119:97–104).

c) He is a man who allows God to work on him constantly.

10. God can abide with a man who does not use his job as a tool for hurting others.

a) He holds himself to what the contract says.

b) He does not misuse contracts to make sure he gets the better deal.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 7: A Man of Moral Purity

The culture is heading down a path and continues to rail against God and what the Scriptures require as purity. Even churches are compromising the standards. It starts with us as we live counter-culturally, to live a life that is totally against the grain of society. We must let the Bible define moral purity. Living a pure life is not optional for the professing Christian. We know that it is the Spirit of God who enables us to have consistent victory over impurities as we yield our will in obedience to Christ. We are never passive as we seek to be pure. We strive every moment of every day.

Bible passages for study:

Matt 15:19–20	1 Thess 4:1–8	Rom 12:1–3	2 Cor 10:3–5
Eph 4:22–24	Jas 1:14	1 Pet 1:18–22	1 Thess 4:2
Phil 3:17–18	Col 1:28–29	Heb 3–4	Rom 13:14
1 John 3:4–10	2 Tim 4:1	Eph 5:1–6	1 Pet 2:11
Jas 4:1–4	Ps 51	Ps 119	

1. The man's thought life (Matt 15:19–20)

    a) The necessity of a careful thought life

        i) Sober-mindedness

        ii) Be on guard (1 Pet 5:8).

        iii) Careful thinking in relation to culture

        iv) Careful thinking in relation to liberties

    b) The necessity of being eternally-minded

        i) Our hope is based on what is to come.

        ii) Our hope is not in this world.

2. The way to mind renovation

    a) Renewal (Rom 12:1–2; Eph 4:22–24; Ps 119)

    b) Renovate our minds in fear of the Lord

        i) We were not redeemed by perishable deeds.

        ii) We were redeemed in moral purity.

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iii) We need to strive to be pure from the inside.

(1) When we are not, we trade on God's grace.

(2) God's kindness and mercy is instructive.

(3) God's kindness protects us from our folly and selfishness.

iv) We need to acknowledge God's grace.

v) We need to accept the grace of others' instruction.

(1) Their battle

(2) Their council

(3) Their accountability

vi) We need to be pliable to the Word.

vii) Remember, we are always vulnerable.

viii) We are less spiritually mature than we tend to imagine.

3. Take a systematic approach that is filled with truth.

a) Place truth in the mind.

i) We must yield in faith.

ii) We must be led by the Holy Spirit.

(1) Intend daily to be pure.

(2) Intend daily to strive.

iii) Use the commands of Scripture as a tool.

(1) Sexual purity is a must as a Christian.

(2) Neither impurity nor impure speech should be named among you (Eph 5:3).

(3) Take every thought captive (2 Cor 10:5).

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b) Protect yourself against fleshly desires (Rom 8:13; 13:14; 1 Thess 4).

4. Warnings about an impure lifestyle

a) *Porneía* word group (sexual immorality outside of marriage) (1 Cor 6:18)

b) *Epithumía* word group (strong desires and cravings—lust) (Jas 1:15)

c) God will not be mocked.

i) You will destroy your conscience.

ii) He will expose your sin.

iii) You will have long-term consequences (Ps 51).

iv) You cannot control it. It will consume you.

d) He will avenge His name (1 Thess 4:6).

e) God will forgive and He is merciful; He will also discipline, even severely (Heb 12:12–13).

5. Choose your friends and influencers wisely (Prov 18:24; 22:24).

a) Live righteously and then impure people will not want to be with you.

b) Be thoughtful about influences in your life.

c) Watch out for "leaders" and "pastors" who are impure.

d) Watch out for those with loose morals and "liberties" that are on the edge.

e) Make Scripture the standard you live by.

f) Be careful about your media intake.

g) Be careful of your acquaintances that work against your conscience.

h) A fall in one area will make it easier to fall in others.

"Sexual purity prevents destruction, but sexual impurity destroys."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 8: A Man Who Treasures Christ

The purpose of this session is to help train men to treasure and prefer Christ. It goes without saying that men need to treasure Christ above all else. Often, idols come between us and Christ. A godly man is disciplining his life to remove idols and put Christ in the preeminent position in his life. It is His worthiness and honor that compel us to live Christ and see death as gain (Phil 1:21).

Bible passages for study:

1 Pet 2:3–7	Heb 11:24–27	Heb 13:7–13	Col 2:3
John 6:68	Phil 3:7–11	Eph 3:18–19	John 17:20–26
2 Cor 4:6–7	Eph 3:8		

1. Christ ought to be our highest treasure (1 Pet 2:3–7).

    a) He is the precious stone.

    b) Since we have tasted the Lord's kindness, Christ is our treasure.

        i) Christ is the "choice" stone and valuable only to those who believe.

        ii) Christ is precious in the sight of God and precious to us.

        iii) Christ is the cornerstone, highly valued and honored.

        iv) A believer must value and prefer Christ.

2. The Scriptures show us a life of faith that overcomes what the world offers.

    a) See the example of Moses (Heb 11:24–27).

        i) Moses chooses ill-treatment over the passing pleasures of sin.

        ii) Moses shows that we must willingly attach our name to Christ.

        iii) Moses' example shows that we must willingly accept reproach as the greater riches. It is the reward in the life to come.

        iv) Moses treasures Christ (v. 26).

        v) In order to prefer Christ above the world, you must confess that the world's pleasure is passing. The world will chide you for your choice to treasure Christ.

        vi) Warning: Many in the evangelical culture today want to be loved.

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(1) You can't be faithful and popular.

(2) You can't court the world's admiration and hold onto Jesus.

(3) You can't keep Jesus without severing from the world (Luke 9:23–27).

b) See the example of Christ (Heb 13:7–13).

i) Jesus is the treasured centerpiece (v. 8).

ii) The contemptible place of suffering is "outside the gate" (v. 12).

iii) We also must be willing to go outside the gate and bear the reproach (v. 13).

(1) If we prefer Him, we are willing.

(2) If our preference is the culture, we will snuggle up to it.

3. We must learn to prefer Christ's Word over human knowledge.

a) In Christ our knowledge and wisdom is found (Col 2:3). The wisdom of the world is really nothing and empty.

b) Christ's disciples treasure/prefer the words of Christ over any human rationalization (John 6:68).

c) When the Bible or a brother in Christ gives us tough words, we don't run. That's not treasuring Christ.

i) We aren't perfect in our obedience, but a Christian loves Christ's words.

ii) We cherish them because they are "the pure milk" we need to grow (1 Pet 2:2).

iii) We reject wrangling (2 Tim 2:14).

d) In love we encourage other men with God's Word when they are facing temptation.

e) We don't need or want to know what anyone thinks about spiritual things outside of what Christ says.

f) We know there will be, and are, false teachers, so we don't have anything to do with worldly fables (1 Tim 4:7).

g) We apprehend God's Word with the illumination of the Holy Spirit; as Christians we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:6–16).

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4. We learn to prefer Christ over personal comfort (Phil 3:7–11).

a) Knowing Him, we prefer the fellowship of His sufferings.

b) We die to personal comforts.

c) Christ is like a pearl of great value (Matt 13:46)—something we pursue, giving up all to treasure.

d) We must have a Christ-centered and eternal mindset (2 Cor 4:7–16).

5. We learn to continually explore and discover the depths of Christ.

a) We plumb the depths of Scripture to know Christ better (Eph 3:18–19).

i) We know the love of Christ as we learn.

ii) It's the kind of love that surpasses knowledge.

iii) Tragically, we often know our profession or hobbies more deeply than we know Christ. We must pursue and treasure Christ by seeking knowledge of Him in greater degrees.

"What are we doing as men of God sitting around plumbing our favorite hobby while our understanding of our Redeemer is scant? This cannot be!"

iv) God bursts forth to bring forth light in Christ. (2 Cor 4:6–7:14).

(1) It is this treasure that motivates the direction of our life.

(2) The life of Christ is manifested in us so others can see and know Christ in us. We are charged to promote Christ.

v) Unfathomable riches are our promise (Eph 3:8).

vi) Christ Himself wants us to be with Him (John 17:20–26).

(1) Christ prays for this very thing.

(2) Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ prays for a person who is constantly sinning (all of His people) to be with Him!

(3) This reality should cause us to desperately treasure Christ.

b) We must be men who grieve/weep when we don't treasure Christ as He deserves.

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i) It is disobedience when we are unwilling to treasure Him.

ii) We sin in wicked ways, but do we hate the sin? Do we hate it when we fail to treasure Christ?

iii) Are we grieved that God actually loved us and sustains us in our salvation while we loved something else instead of Him?

iv) Are we deeply grieved when we learn that someone walked away from Christ?

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 2: THE MAN OF GOD
Study 9: A Man Who Speaks the Truth

Relationships with others can be difficult. Dealing with your own heart is difficult enough, and bringing another's into it only doubles the challenge in navigating relationships. Whether a believer or not, everyone ought to receive the same love and truth in our speech. This section will help reinforce the need for Christians to be speaking truth to whomever they encounter for the sake of Christ.

Bible passages for study:

Ps 4:4-8	Ps 51:6	1 Cor 4:5	Zech 8:16–17
Prov 6:12–14	Prov 12:19–20, 22	Prov 14:25; 17:23	Prov 18; 19:28; 20:19
Eph 4:17–32	Eph 5:3–5; 6:14		

This is one of the more challenging lessons in the Christian life. Interactions with others are ongoing throughout each day and it's important to model what is given to us in Scripture as we relate to one another through conversation. There are times when we will be offended, hurt, and lied to. But even those circumstances do not necessitate a response other than what Christ demonstrated during His ministry.

1. Recognize your status in Christ (Eph 4:17–25).

a) You are no longer to live as pagans.

b) Unbelievers' lives are marked by futile thinking and hardness of heart.

i) Leads to sensuality

ii) Impurity

iii) Greed

c) Being in Christ means that you are to live exactly opposite to the way that unbelievers live (v. 20).

d) You have laid aside the "old self" (v. 22).

e) The new self is

i) "in the likeness of God" (v. 24).

ii) "created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (v. 24).

f) Strong habits of the new life are needed to avoid the temptation for deceitfulness.

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g) The struggle is at the heart level.

h) Deceit is not merely lying to others but propagating falsehood before the Lord.

i) Lay aside falsehood (v. 25).

ii) Speak truth (v. 25).

2. Gird up your loins with truthfulness (Eph 6:14).

a) Truthfulness ought to be worn at all times.

b) God delights in truth in our inward being (Ps 51:6).

c) Hypocrisy defines the lives of those who are rebellious toward God.

d) Truth should always be spoken to your neighbor (Zech 8:16–17).

i) Make for peace.

ii) Do not devise evil in your hearts.

iii) Do not love false oaths.

iv) There should be no hidden deals or private agendas.

(1) Consider the hidden deal to turn over Christ to the authorities.

(2) Greed and envy were the motivations.

e) In dealing with Christians, we are members of the same body.

f) Those who are truthful are blessed forever (Prov 12:19–20).

g) Those who lie are an abomination (Prov 12:22).

h) Justice depends on truthfulness (Prov 14:25; 17:23; 19:28).

3. Guard against whispering/gossip (Prov 18:8).

a) This is another type of destructive dishonesty.

b) It involves spreading rumors to belittle others.

c) It involves playing games to make yourself feel better.

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d) These "morsels" can endanger or destroy reputations.

e) Those who enjoy this practice are known as slanderers (Prov 20:19).

f) The more mature in Christ we become the more careful we should become in our speech.

g) Questions to ask before engaging in the spread of information:

– What am I sharing and why am I sharing it?

– Am I potentially widening harm by expanding the information?

4. Avoid manipulative techniques of speech (Prov 6:12–14).

a) This does not refer only to perverse speech.

b) It includes manipulative tactics with hidden signals while appearing to speak honestly to the victim.

c) Don't give the impression of helping others while actually deceiving them.

5. Be diligent to keep a clear conscience (1 Cor 4:5).

a) Just because your brother may not see the intentions of your heart does not mean you are not guilty.

b) God will reveal all things kept secret on earth.

c) Offer only what is good for edification (Eph 4:25–29).

d) Be sure to be putting all slander away from you (Eph 4:31).

e) Our own forgiveness should be a constant reminder to do so.

6. Respond rightly to those who are deceptive toward you (Ps 4).

a) Do not remain indignant and sin toward them (v. 4).

b) Be still. Calm your soul (v. 4).

c) Continue to trust the Lord with all things (v. 5).

d) Know that God will ultimately protect you (v. 8).

7. Always be aware that you bear the name of Christ (Eph 5:3–5).

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a) No filthy language, foolish talk, or coarse jesting should be known among Christians.

b) The giving of thanks should be recognized as the pattern of your life.

c) Guard your reputation by what comes out of your mouth.

See Appendix: "Navigating the Gray Areas of Life"

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 3: PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
Study 1: How Should We "Do" Ministry?

A Philosophy of Ministry is a set of unalterable principles (non-negotiables) that determines how we will function in ministry.

The purpose of this session is to develop and understand a thoroughly biblical philosophy of ministry. Temptations and idolatries governing unbiblical approaches to ministry will also be discussed and examined.

Bible passages for study:

Eph 4:12–16	John 13:35	1 Cor 10:31	1 Tim 3:15
Matt 5:13–16	Titus 2:11–15	Rom 3:10–18	Jer 17:9–10
Gen 6:5	Rom 3:23		

1. Prerequisites for understanding faithful ministry (Eph 4:12–16)

    a) Principles governing ministry don't change based on the culture.

        i) Benign cultural elements can and should change.

        ii) Application of the principles will depend somewhat on the culture.

    b) God has designed ministry to be long-term.

        i) It requires faith.

        ii) It requires patience.

    c) Ministry is cyclical.

    d) Ministry results are entirely out of our hands.

        i) We can't produce or manufacture results.

        ii) We can't often measure the results.

2. Idolatries that drive an unbiblical philosophy of ministry

"Changing methodology for the sake of 'results' proves your ministry is being governed by idolatry."

    a) Cultural influence

        i) Approval of man/fear of man

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"Could it be that a failure to implement a faithful philosophy of ministry is not only that we fear being disliked by the world, but also that we fear being disliked by the church?"

ii) A desire to remove the offense of the gospel

iii) An elevation of humanitarian-centeredness

iv) Numbers for numbers' sake

b) Unbelief

i) Our flesh is prone to not trust the Lord's method.

ii) Our flesh is prone to want quick, visible results.

"We have become convinced that the only way to attract people to our Jesus is to warm them up to Him by meeting all of the felt needs, both tangible and not, in the culture. This is very attractive to our flesh because to be about gospel ministry and not humanitarian efforts first and foremost is offensive, even with many in the church. We must realize that the Jesus that exists in many churches today only exists to the degree that He is relevant to their humanitarian efforts."

3. Principles that govern a faithful philosophy of ministry (Eph 4:12–16)

a) It should be done to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).

i) Not in order to be viewed as "successful"

ii) Not in order to have the results terminate on us

b) It should be geared toward Christlikeness.

i) The sheep are to think like Christ.

ii) The sheep are to speak like Christ.

iii) The sheep are to act like Christ.

"What is biblical growth? According to Ephesians 4:12–16, it is the maturing of the saints unto the stature of the fullness of Christ. There's no growth that matters that has to do with numbers. It's depth, not width, that we are to be concerned with. 'A mile wide and an inch deep' is not endorsed by Christ, and that sadly describes evangelicalism in America today."

c) It has a consistent and unified approach to ministry.

i) The sheep should be built up in the faith.

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ii) The sheep should mature spiritually.

iii) The sheep should be equipped to do the ministry of the gospel.

d) It is concerned with doctrinal precision (Eph 4:13).

i) "unity of the faith"

ii) Notice the definite article. It is "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3).

e) It is fundamentally strategic and thoroughly biblical.

i) It is driven by the explicit teaching of Scripture.

ii) It is driven by the implicit methodologies seen in Scripture.

4. Key components that permeate every aspect of a faithful ministry

The principles found within this section on philosophy of ministry are a compilation of materials—some developed by Grace Immanuel Bible Church, Jupiter, FL, as well as many adaptations from materials of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, under the leadership of Dr. John MacArthur. We are deeply indebted to Dr. MacArthur and the pastoral team at Grace Community for their labors and biblical clarity through the years on this vital subject.

a) A high view of God

i) A failure to have a high a view of God leads to a toleration of sin and a focus on man's evaluation rather than God's truth.

ii) God is holy, righteous, and just (Exod 34:6–8; Isa 6:1–3; Jer 9:24; Rom 11:33-36; Rev 4:8–11).

iii) We, then, must be holy (practical sanctification).

b) The authority and sufficiency of Scripture

A failure to hold to the sufficiency of Scripture inevitably leads to personal experience as the authority, and contemporary thinking as the guide for living, rather than divine truth.

i) It is the sole authority for our lives and conduct.

ii) It has sufficient relevance for every situation.

(1) Through explicit instruction

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(2) Through implicit principles

c) An accurate anthropology

i) Mankind is totally depraved.

(1) He can do no good on his own (Rom 3:10–18).

(2) His heart is deceitfully wicked (Jer 17:9–10).

(3) He is driven continually by selfishness and evil (Gen 6:5).

ii) Mankind is alienated from God and seeks to glorify himself (Rom 3:23).

d) A proper understanding of the purpose of the church

i) The church exists to worship and glorify God (1 Cor 10:31).

ii) The church is the repository of divine truth (1 Tim 3:15).

iii) The church encourages mutual edification (Eph 4:12–16).

iv) The church provides the context for the use of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12–14; Rom 12; Eph 4).

v) The church is a light in a dark world (Matt 5:13–16; Titus 2:11–15).

"A failure to correctly understand the purpose of the church leads to superficial and counterfeit ministry, resulting in disunity. 'Program success' is glorified, rather than God. People become passive spectators rather than active participants. Leadership is forced to spin all the plates to keep the programs functioning."

5. Satan's agenda with the church's philosophy of ministry

a) He knows what's at stake.

i) Gospel influence

ii) Sanctification of God's people

iii) God's glory

b) He seeks to distract.

i) He weakens our fundamentals.

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ii) He propagates false doctrine.

iii) He tempts us with pragmatic results.

c) He convinces the deceived of their "maturity" and "influence."

"If Satan can weaken us in the fundamentals of spiritual maturation, the end goal of gospel influence becomes vulnerable to error, and we become easily distracted and enamored with vain things and pragmatic results. Satan gets the pragmatic church to assume that it is accomplishing great things, when in fact they are deceived and are doing ministry man's way, not God's."

Suggested resource: George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry*.

6. Results of a biblical philosophy of ministry (Eph 4:12–16).

a) The church is built up.

b) The church is unified in its doctrine.

c) The church becomes like Christ.

d) The church is protected from falsehood and deception.

e) The church has actual gospel influence.

"Granted, there's nothing about the culture or the world explicitly in Ephesians 4:12–16. But Jesus does say that if you love one another like that (the way you are called to in Ephesians 4), then you will have influence (John 13:35). That's the result of a faithful ministry. That is the light to the world, not humanitarian aid. Become like Jesus and He will make us a light to the world. If we will be satisfied to become like Christ, we will influence the world."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 3: PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
Study 2: Church for His Glory

The purpose of this session is to describe how truth should govern the way a church does ministry. Only then can a church can be convinced that it is truly doing ministry for God's purposes and glory and not its own.

Bible passages for study:

1 Pet 4:10	1 Cor 12:11–26	Rom 12:5–6
1 Tim 3:15	1 Pet 2:2	2 Tim 4:3

1. Truth must govern everything (1 Tim 3:15).

    a) The church is the "pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

    b) Governing principles don't change because the truth doesn't change.

        i) Truth is what the church stands for.

        ii) Truth is the church's "product."

        iii) Truth is upheld by the church.

        iv) Truth is propagated by the church.

    c) The preferences of the culture and the church are irrelevant (2 Tim 4:3).

    "It doesn't matter what the culture thinks about or wants concerning the truth. It doesn't even matter what the sheep think or want concerning the truth. They need the truth regardless of how they feel about it."

2. The truth demands that Christ functions as the Head of the church.

    a) He gives the church its script for ministry.

    b) He accomplishes whatever results He pleases.

    c) The church trusts Him with the results.

3. When truth doesn't govern the church

    a) Man becomes the head of the church.

        i) He makes up his own script for ministry.

        ii) He inevitably becomes a pragmatist.

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b) Man becomes the center of the church.

i) The people's felt needs govern the direction of the church.

ii) Pleasing people becomes the primary agenda.

iii) Numerical goals are put in place.

"Man-centered ministries result in superficial and socially-oriented programs whereby the church will always conform its ministry to its view of success. This inevitably leads to confusing size with success ('bigger is better')."

c) Results are manufactured.

d) Bylaws dictate ministry.

e) "Reaching" someone is redefined.

"According to this redefinition you do whatever you can to get them in the door and do whatever you can to keep them in the door. True discipleship never happens; rather, each 'convert' simply becomes part of the pragmatic program to 'reach' the next person."

f) Biblical leadership is redefined.

i) "Type A personalities"

ii) CEO of large corporations

iii) Contrastingly, the biblical requirements for leaders:

(1) Exemplary, Christ-like character (1 Tim 3:1–13, Titus 1:5–9)

(2) Desire and ability to equip the people for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11–12), while providing a context and environment to do so

iv) Church becomes optional and no longer essential.

v) The world takes over the pews.

"In light of 1 Peter 2:2, it is very telling to examine what the church today longs for. Go to the average, well meaning, duped believer in a superficial ministry; they are longing for cultural acceptance, a slice of the American dream, economic security, emotional wholeness, someone to give them their best life here and now, to give them relief from their troubling circumstances, etc. It's anything but the Word, and the Christ of the Word that they are longing for. Yet the Scripture calls us to long for the nutrients of the Word. So when the church decides it's going to give people what

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they are longing for, (anything but Christ), the problem clearly develops. It's at odds with the Head of the church, Christ. This is how the church fills up with unbelievers and, at best, moralizes the people who are there."

4. How truth governs the mutual assembly of believers.

"Christ wants to build you up, which means you need to be built up, which means you aren't where you need to be. You don't have the option to be an individual with your own preferences and pursuits in the body of Christ. The church should be at the center of your life, not a fringe activity you do on the weekends."

a) Uniqueness among members does not mean isolation. We are "individually members one of another" (Rom 12:5).

i) We bring uniqueness, but we are never disconnected from one another.

ii) When you make a decision how you are going to live, it affects every other person in the body of Christ.

iii) Your money, work, friends, ethics, family life—it all affects others in the body.

b) Being in a spiritual family is a gift from the Lord.

i) It provides accountability.

ii) It provides the context for growth and building up.

c) Spiritual gifts within the assembly

"Spiritual gifts are a God-given capacity through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to the body of Christ. It is a person's unique capacity to serve the body and is the Holy Spirit's sovereign channel to minister to the lives of His elect."

i) Employing them is not optional (Rom 12:6).

ii) It's a stewardship issue (1 Pet 4:10).

iii) They are dictated by the Lord (1 Cor 12:11).

iv) All of them are invaluable (1 Cor 12:14-26).

v) Their proper exercise ensures the health of the church (Eph 4:16).

vi) The abuse of spiritual gifts

(1) A gravitation toward the showy gifts (1 Cor 12:14–26)

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(2) Leads to a deformed body

(3) Leads to arrogance and condescension

"Are you deforming the body of Christ by not using your gifts, either in the implementation of them, or the attitude of them? Behind the scenes giftedness keep us humble by not allowing the showy gifts to get out of control (1 Cor 12:21–26)."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 3: PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
Study 3: The Peril of Manufacturing Growth

The purpose of this session is to contrast the folly of man's methods at doing ministry from God's method of doing ministry. The content of this study will also show that although man cleverly tries to manufacture results in ministry, God alone is able to cause the growth.

Bible passages for study:

1 Cor 3:6–7	1 Cor 2:14	2 Tim 4:2	Eph 4:17
1 Cor 2:10	Heb 10:24–25	Eph 4:11–12	1 Cor 2:2–5
Titus 1:5–9			

1. Why is manufacturing growth so appealing?

a) We like to be able to measure external results.

b) We attach significance to our spiritual influence.

c) We want to assuage guilt by saying, "I'm doing something spiritual, look and see!"

d) It doesn't require faith.

e) We can claim that we played a role in it (through our innovative programs, etc.).

f) It is short-term "success," which is typically not hard work.

g) We want signs of spiritual life in those we care about.

"If you want your congregation or your family or your friends to be in glory for any reason other than for Christ's sake, then you will manufacture results, or at least be strongly tempted to."

2. God alone causes the growth (1 Cor 3:7).

a) Man is merely an instrument for the growth (1 Cor 3:6).

b) Meaningful, supernatural growth happens only if God does it.

3. When man tries to manufacture growth

a) In 1 Corinthians 2:2–5, Paul is basically saying, "If I put my finger on the tickling point of the culture and they respond positively, how do I know if they truly believed and have not just bought into my man-made message?"

b) The "Jesus model" of ministry; i.e.,

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– He was compassionate; we are compassionate.

– He was humble; we are humble.

– He fed people; we feed people.

– He cared for the sick; we care for the sick.

– He was well loved and popular; people love us and we're popular.

– He was never harsh; we aren't harsh.

"Dealing in these types of vague generalities is not only not in keeping with God's plan for the church, but also serves to feed a strong desire to have a comfortable existence where following Christ isn't costly in terms of reputation, economics, and personal influence. The world has little problem with the Jesus of the 'Jesus model.' The offense of the gospel has been removed and the church can convince itself that people are attracted to its Jesus when in fact the world is attracted to the humanitarian efforts and programs, not Jesus."

c) A program-centered ministry

i) Duplicating a "model program." This will always lead to a problem because the specifics of how God chooses to work in any given situation varies depending upon the nature and needs of the people and uniqueness of each circumstance.

ii) Stay with an existing program. A church keeps doing ministry a certain way because "this is the way we have always done it." However, this will inevitably lead to frustration or failure because people and their needs constantly change.

4. Functioning as a herald prevents us from manufacturing growth.

a) *Kērússō* means "to herald" or "to proclaim" (2 Tim 4:2).

b) What are the herald's priorities?

i) To deliver the king's message (meaning)

ii) To personify the king's urgency (passion)

iii) To invoke the king's authority

iv) To explain the king's implications

v) To repeat the king's ultimatums

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vi) A herald could not and would not alter the message based on any response.

"What we have done today is put ourselves in a position of authority, discerned whether the audience will like the king's message, and then adapt it so that they will like it. This is not what the office of a herald did."

"We must realize that if God wants to harden He will harden. If He wants to soften He will soften. The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. If the preaching is manufactured (anything but heralding the king's message), then the results are manufactured."

5. Understanding biblical leadership prevents us from manufacturing growth.

a) Leaders must reflect the character of Christ and be exemplary for the flock (1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9).

b) Leaders must adequately equip the people to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11–12).

c) Leaders must provide ample opportunity for the sheep to do this work (Heb 10:24–25).

"A failure to correctly understand biblical leadership leads to unbiblical discipleship and skewed ministry priorities. A lack of biblical priorities leads to ministry in sin with a focus on skills or ability rather than godly character. This will inevitably lead to disqualifying sins."

6. How and what we pray is indicative of our view of spiritual growth and ministry.

a) Praying for numerical growth and program success reveals that we are more concerned with our kingdom than God's.

b) Praying for godly convictions to be developed leading to transformation:

– Changed affections

– Challenged viewpoints

– Idolatries exposed

– Conviction of sin leading to repentance

– New patterns of thinking and living

– That the church would be strengthened and protected

– That God would be glorified whether the hearts are softened or hardened

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 4: UNITY IN LEADERSHIP
Study: Bringing Unity to Divided Leadership

The purpose of this session is to encourage those who are called to be leaders in the church (elders, deacons, etc.) to use the conflict in the church to produce greater unity rather than to cause factions and fractures. Although sin is inevitable among sinful leaders, it is not necessary and, in fact, it is greatly dishonoring to the Lord. The following material will discuss the causes of conflict, the responses to conflict, and the biblical principles to navigate through conflict.

Bible passages for study:

Eph 4:3	1 Cor 1:9–10	1 Pet 5:1–5
Phil 2:1–2	Matt 13:24–30	2 Cor 11:13–15
Acts 20:29–30	Rom 16:17–18	Rom 14
Jas 1:2–5	1 Tim 3:3	2 Tim 2:24–26
1 Cor 10:13	Jas 1	Phil 1
Heb 13:17	2 Tim 2:24–25	Prov 17:17
2 Thess 2:7	Rom 12:18	Col 3:13–15

The church of Jesus Christ is the most glorious living organism ever conceived in the untraceable mind of God. The church is the possession of God and the exquisite workmanship of His wise and holy character. She has been purchased with the precious blood of her Lord, the unrivaled Head of the body. She is loved and adored by every saint, who by grace alone enjoys sweet entrance and fellowship. She is fiercely hated by Satan and his fallen hosts, and continually under siege by the world, which cannot tolerate her powerful, living dynamic of sanctification unto holiness.

Her growth is divinely ordained; her endurance is superintended and assured; her ultimate perseverance and final glory cannot be shaken! She will one day bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ without stain or wrinkle, in all holiness and majesty.

For now, however, the church is not yet purified, not yet clothed in final majesty, not yet the beautiful bride of heavenly splendor. The people of God are in a daily battle with sin, locked in mortal combat in a state of perpetual, high-alert praying for grace, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and looking toward the blessed hope of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the church is being purified, some seasons in the body of Christ are extremely disheartening. Appearing as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation is challenge enough, but the body of Christ battles on an even greater front: to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3). Moreover, the strength of the ministry is directly commensurate with the godly unity of its leadership.

"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:9–10).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 4: UNITY IN LEADERSHIP
Study: Bringing Unity to Divided Leadership

"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet 5:1–5).

With constant prayer, humility before God's Word, and mutual love expressed toward one another, we must labor to preserve the unity we have in the Holy Spirit.

1. The underlying basis for all unity (Phil 2:1–2)

    a) Paul starts this treatise for unity with an appeal to grace.

    b) To preserve unity, your ministry must be saturated in grace.

    "Even when unity in leadership is built on solid doctrine, it is bound to falter and ultimately fail if it lacks grace."

    c) Division demonstrates selfishness and a lack of graciousness toward one another.

    d) Personal pride fosters this ungraciousness toward others.

        i) Believing your opinions are always right

        ii) Refusal to listen to others

        iii) Pride often plagues young pastors

2. The most common causes of division among the saints

    a) Different personalities (people skills)—interpersonal friction can arise from abrasive personality differences.

    b) Different perspectives (background)—family, tradition, economics, history, status, structure, style, etc.

        i) Individuals will view events and circumstances differently.

        ii) Their responses are conditioned by past experiences. The same information may trigger distinctly different images and opinions in the mind.

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iii) It is possible that each perspective has a degree of validity when seen from that particular perspective.

c) Different purposes (objectives)—without an understanding of the information which led to their disagreement, a lack of support, and even open opposition can arise.

d) Different pursuits—a believer can be out of step with God on a long-term basis and thus be rebellious, bitter, and vindictive.

e) Different power—Christ tells us in Matthew 13:24–30 that wherever there is a true body of believers, Satan will plant false believers.

i) These false or pseudo-believers will work in harmony with Satan's purpose to cause strife.

ii) "False apostles" (2 Cor 11:13–15)

iii) "Savage wolves … not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29–30)

Watch must be kept "on those who cause dissensions" (Rom 16:17).

3. Some common and wrong approaches to conflict among saints

a. Defensiveness

i) This posture seeks to defend self and/or others at all costs.

ii) It seeks to make sure you come out clean whatever the cost, even at the expense of biblical solutions.

b. Aggression

i) This posture primarily tries to find fault rather than to resolve the issue.

ii) It seeks to place the blame on someone else by direct or indirect implication.

c. Abdication

This happens when a leader mistakenly believes that time and a positive environment alone will resolve conflict.

4. Principles for bringing unity to a divided leadership

a) Separate biblical principles from personal preferences.

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i) Not everything in the leadership of the church is a matter of clear biblical mandate (Rom 14).

ii) Where strong disagreements arise, godly leaders go to work, making clear distinctions between preferences and explicit or implicit principles which bind the conscience.

b) Model and teach the James 1:2–5 perspective through every conflict.

i) Leaders cannot be effective if they run from conflict. When men are being tested for leadership competence, they should demonstrate a willingness to embrace the challenge of trials in the ministry.

ii) No one in the leadership should be spoiling for a fight (1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:24).

iii) If one of your men seems to stir up strife and rather enjoys doing so, they must step away from leadership until they deal with the pride that causes it.

iv) On the other hand, if leaders run at the first sign of conflict, they will not only miss the sanctifying grace of trials in their own life, but they will leave the sheep vulnerable to the enemy's schemes.

v) Trust the promise of God (1 Cor 10:13).

vi) Use the trial to produce endurance (Jas 1:2–4).

c) Maintain a focus on larger vision for the ministry.

i) Christ and His church

ii) The greater progress of the gospel (Phil 1:12)

d) Encourage everyone involved in the conflict to participate in the solution

i) Personal examination

ii) Use of spiritual gifts

iii) Ownership of the outcome

e) Set short- and long-term goals so that everyone can envision the fruitful outcome.

i) Safeguards against laziness

ii) Forces diligent study for clearer articulation of the principles which drive solutions

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iii) Provides for clearer communication to the sheep

f) Build compassion for those who are driven away by friction.

i) A "wilderness" is sometimes needed for those who depart.

ii) Recognizing this helps guard against bitterness by challenging leaders to love the unlovely (2 Tim 2:24–25).

g) Work hard at defining and maintaining unanimity within the leadership.

i) Spirit-led unanimity on all explicit doctrine and ministry principles

ii) Spirit-led humility and deference on all preferences (with a sensitivity about giftedness, strengths, and weaknesses)

h) Admonish and, if necessary, discipline the wayward.

i) Maintain open access to the leadership by the congregation.

i) "Shepherd the flock of God among you" (1 Pet 5:2).

ii) "We proved to be gentle among you" (1 Thess 2:7).

j) Consistently develop wise leadership for the next generation.

k) Exercise prudent forethought in regard to significant ministry changes.

5. Biblical Christians are learning how to be peacemakers.

a) We should know how to make peace.

b) We should know how to diagnose the root cause of the lack of peace.

c) Growing to become a peacemaker is some of the hardest work one will ever do. The purpose of striving is unity (Rom 12:18; Col 3:13–15).

6. Principles for being a peacemaker in conflict

a) Christ is the Lord over the conscience (Rom 14:3–4).

i) Is the conflict an explicit issue in Scripture or a gray area or a preference?

ii) Others are not beholden to me. They either stand or fall under Christ.

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iii) Just because someone doesn't hold our same convictions, we cannot reach the conclusion that they are less spiritual than we are.

b) Tension can be good for your own heart.

i) It exposes weaknesses.

ii) We get sharpened in the confrontation to examine our own convictions and become more precise in their articulation.

c) Open the Bible early in any conflict.

d) Be haunted to be precise with God's Word and our speech. Challenge yourself to articulate your speech with painstaking clarity.

e) "Iron sharpens iron" (Prov 27:17). How? With collision, friction and sparks.

f) Conflict provides a challenge for my greater good and for my endurance (Jas 1:2–4).

g) Growing in peacemaking stretches humility.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 5: HERMENEUTICS
Study: An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics
(by Matt Waymeyer)

The only goal of biblical interpretation that truly honors the authority of God's Word is to discover the divinely intended meaning that was communicated by the original author to the original audience in the original context.

Bible passages for study:

Ezra 7:10 2 Tim 2:15 2 Pet 3:16

1. Introduction: *what does this verse mean to* you*?*

2. Clarifying the goal of Bible interpretation

a) The pattern of Ezra

"For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

i) Study

ii) Practice

iii) Teach

b) The goal of interpretation

To discover the divinely intended meaning that was communicated:

– by the original author

– to the original audience

– in the original context (It cannot mean *now* what it did not mean *then*!)

(Cf. 2 Tim 2:15; 2 Pet 3:16—there is a *right* and a *wrong* interpretation!)

c) The danger of eisegesis

Eisegesis	**Exegesis**
Prefix *eis*—"into"	Prefix *ex*—"out of"
Reads meaning *into* the biblical text	Reads meaning *out of* the biblical text
Meaning is: (a) determined by contemporary reader	Meaning is: (a) determined by original author (b) discovered by contemporary reader

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3. Avoiding the pitfalls of Bible interpretation

a) Three broad categories

i) *Mis*-interpretation: ascribing the *wrong* meaning to a passage
(true meaning is A, but interpretation is B)

ii) *Sub*-interpretation: failing to ascertain the *full* meaning of a passage
(true meaning is A, B, C, but interpretation is A)

iii) *Super*-interpretation: attributing *more* to a passage than was intended
(true meaning is A, but interpretation is A, B, C)

b) Seven specific pitfalls

i) Proof-texting

ii) Allegorizing Scripture

iii) Christologizing Scripture

iv) Personalizing Scripture

v) Decontextualizing Scripture

vi) Reading Scripture through the lens of:

(1) Human reason

(2) A theological system

(3) Continuity or discontinuity

(4) Other passages of Scripture

(5) Your own intuition

(6) Your own personal experience

(7) Your own personal convictions

vii) Reading the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament

See Appendix: "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Interpretation"
"Hermeneutical Analysis Template"

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 6: EXPOSITORY PREACHING
Study 1: Developing Clear and Compelling Sermons

The goal of homiletics is to find the best way to present the content of a passage to an audience so that they can benefit from the truth the same way you have. It isn't enough for a teacher to know what a passage means. You can diagram, outline the structure, and get the main point, but it isn't effective unless you can articulate it so that others can clearly understand. This step in the process requires careful attention. Even if you are a gifted communicator, winging it doesn't serve your people well. This does not mean that there is somehow special power in homiletics; the power is in the Word of God. However, in homiletics we want to do all we can to be clear and remove everything that hinders clarity.

Bible passages for study:

Ezra 7:10 Jas 3:1 Titus 2:15

Delivering Clear and Compelling Sermons

1. Introduction: set up the passage effectively for your audience.

a) Purpose: transition people and help prepare them for serious reflection upon a passage of Scripture.

i) People are coming from different backgrounds and experiences throughout the week.

ii) People need to be transitioned from what they were just doing and into your Bible lesson.

iii) As the teacher, you have spent hours in the passage—the audience hasn't yet—so they must be brought along.

b) Prequalification: understand the text and submit to it before you can craft the introduction.

i) Study the text in depth.

ii) Think about the implications for your own heart (Ezra 7:10).

iii) Write down the answers to the questions you asked your own heart to use as content. For example:

– What ways do I sin against this truth?

– Why do I struggle with this truth?

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– What must I change in light of this truth?

– What is the fruit of submitting to this truth in my life?

– What idols could this expose?

– What wrong thinking could be had about this passage?

"Your introduction will come off as plastic even if you are an amazing communicator if you aren't applying the truth to your own life first."

c) Packaging: make the main point of the text gripping to people so that they want to hear what you are about to teach them from the Scriptures.

i) Make the introduction compelling and bring a sense of urgency.

ii) Compel people to study. Help them see that they individually have a problem that this text will answer.

iii) Incorporate some of the following elements:

– The problem that the text will solve

– How the passage is personally working on your heart

– Analogies

– Illustrations from human history (not sensationalistic)

– Penetrating questions

– Specific changes that your audience needs to make

iv) Avoid introductions that don't match the theme or driving force of the text.

2. Transition: move from the introduction into the body of the sermon.

a) Proposition

i) Make a propositional truth claim. (This is an assertion about the text.)

ii) Answer the question, "What is this text teaching?"

b) Plan

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i) Give a plan (a structure, an outline) for how you are going to move through the content.

ii) Give the number of ways the biblical author presents the main truth of the passage, and how he does it (i.e., plural noun propositional statements: principles, contrasts, illustrations, practices, commands, etc.).

iii) Benefits of having an exegetically-derived outline

– Protects you from being scattered

– Keeps you in a cadence

– Keeps you on task

– Helps your listeners hear the main points and substructure as you repeat it

3. Message: have a method for working through a passage for the sake of clarity. Here is a good pattern to follow:

a) Explain

i) Give a principle from the text.

ii) Explain the principle.

b) Argue

i) Prove how the principle comes from the text (word study, syntactical study, solve/explain grammatical nuance).

ii) Reference how the principle points back to the main proposition of the sermon as a whole.

iii) Use other passages if needed to clarify your interpretation (i.e., "the analogy of Scripture").

iv) This method ensures that the authority for what you say is the text itself.

c) Illustrate

i) Add cross-references to demonstrate the consistency of God's Word on the point of the sermon or principle.

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ii) Use topical analysis resources, but do not always assume that similar wording always has the same meaning in different texts. Matches must be specific, not similar.

d) Implicate

i) Put yourself in the shoes of the original hearer of the text. What perspectives would have been challenged?

ii) Be clear about whether your implications are explicit or implicit, inferred or illustrated.

iii) Overwhelm the hearts of the audience with the contrast of what they understood about God coming into the sermon, and what this passage is pulling them toward as they hear the sermon.

iv) Make it your goal to put truth into the minds of your hearers, and let it confront them.

v) Confront the inner-life idolatries common to man through presenting the implications in the text.

vi) Explore your own heart in the study and how the Holy Spirit is illumining your mind, so you can open the floodgate of personal implications onto the audience.

vii) Preaching should not be just informational. Meaning without implications is fruitless. Preaching confronts the will.

e) Summarize

i) Tie the principle back to the overall main proposition of the text.

ii) Summarize implications. (This can be done either after each point or at the end of the message as a whole.)

iii) Preach your point again, uniting the principle one final time to the main point of the text, and repeat steps for remaining points.

iv) Drive home your proposition in order to keep people thinking.

Faithfully Exhorting the Will

One of the problems of preaching to the will of the audience is that unless you are called to preach in a pulpit context, there will be the tendency to not be forceful. This could be due to context or sheepishness about your own growth, which prevents you from teaching with authority.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 6: EXPOSITORY PREACHING
Study 1: Developing Clear and Compelling Sermons

1. The Bible should be the authority, not the teacher.

2. The teacher needs to proactively strive to live what he preaches, or else he is a hypocrite and should not teach (Jas 3:1).

3. Do not let anyone hearing your teaching disregard it (Titus 2:15).

4. Striving to live out convictions from the text in your own life proves your love for the audience being preached to.

5. Add stimulating questions that force people to contribute by thinking out loud, and subsequently shape the discussion.

6. Dialogue teaching is not about the dialogue from the discussion, which is a temptation. Be wary of allowing for these types of meetings. This is where having a plan and following through with the outline will focus the discussion on what the text actually says, the main point of the passage.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 6: EXPOSITORY PREACHING
Study 2: The Challenges of an Expository Ministry

Because exposition is perceived to be difficult to sit under, pastors many times compromise and find alternative approaches to biblical preaching that are easier for the congregation. This thought process is misguided and a common misconception. This results in an unnecessary burden on the preacher to be creative and address immediate, felt, and practical needs rather than just teach the content that God gave us as He laid it out. These faulty methods demonstrate a pride that there is a way to improve upon God's desired method of communication.

Bible passages for study:

2 Tim 4:3 1 Pet 1:4 Jas 5:20 Prov 19:11
1 Tim 4:13

1. Reasons why expository preaching is challenging for the listener

a) We are generally soft, and we like things easy in our culture.

i) We are accustomed to getting information in sound bites (short, quick snippets).

ii) We want helpful information that is immediately practical and doesn't require reflection or effort to apply.

iii) We want content that is simple and easy to access. ("Don't make me think too hard.")

iv) We want our personal issues to be addressed weekly from the pulpit (like a one-on-one counseling session).

v) We like variety and the same person presenting gets old to listen to over time.

vi) We want something more entertaining than a sermon on a few verses.

b) We are spiritually weak and lack faith.

i) We naturally struggle under preaching that brings conviction and requires change.

ii) We want to be able to crank out change and see progress from immediate application.

iii) We have a hard time waiting for biblical change to take place slowly over the long haul as the Spirit uses the Word to produce growth.

iv) We find certain passages of Scripture to be obscure or difficult to identify with as relevant.

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2. The attitude of the day is that the preacher should be relevant.

a) The foolishness of striving to be relevant (as described by Os Guinness, *Prophetic Untimeliness: A Challenge to the Idol of Relevance* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005]).

i) The preacher who pursues relevance will become increasingly irrelevant.

(1) If you try to be like the crowd, you become irrelevant to the crowd because you are saying the same thing.

(2) To be transcendent is to be different from the crowd—to say something different.

ii) The preacher immersed in the culture and being relevant will never be relevant to Christ's sheep.

b) The alternative: letting God's Word speak in preaching. God's Word:

– does a supernatural work in the hearts of people.

– protects a ministry from building on man's wisdom. (If God speaks, God draws.)

– is timeless throughout the ages.

– is unchanging regardless of changing contexts.

– keeps the preacher from adopting fads.

– provides all the context the preacher needs (even more than his own context).

– is relevant to all God's people.

3. Objections to heralding God's Word and leaving relevance to God

a) "With our creative preaching we will reach people you will never reach."

i) Rebuttal 1: New Christians can access and love exposition because it is the Spirit of God speaking through His Word to them. Anyone with the Spirit can access expositional preaching, and then an appetite is cultivated over time.

ii) Rebuttal 2: Is your ministry to the shallowest people group that a substantive ministry can't reach?

b) "We meet people where they are by speaking their language" (i.e., addressing their felt needs).

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– Rebuttal: The problem with felt needs is that we don't assess our needs rightly. Evangelicalism has created its own list of things that need to be changed. With regard to our definition of sanctification, we tend to:

– think externally.

– think behaviorally.

– think practically.

– think in clichés (which strip the Bible of the divine force arising from its context).

– think in terms of what tickles our ears (i.e., gives us what we want to hear in the way we want to hear it (2 Tim 4:3).

4. What is the key issue that separates biblically-grounded preaching from other kinds?

a) Content is always the issue (even though people will say that it is a style issue).

i) No one says it is a content issue, it will be disguised as being something else.

(1) Good content consists of principles derived from the text in context.

(2) Because of its exegetical origin, this good content carries real authority.

ii) Having God's content doesn't mean merely an information dump.

b) Faithful preaching:

i) comes from the text in context.

ii) is clear.

iii) is compelling.

iv) is implicational ("grabs the listener by the collar").

c) Some preachers sound authoritative, but it is their personality, not the text that is authoritative.

i) They are powerful, big personalities.

ii) They are known for their style.

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iii) They are making strong assertions.

iv) They are not grounding assertions in content.

v) They are giving opinions.

vi) They are not walking through a text and letting that be the authority.

5. Common substitutes for expository preaching

a) Sermons that start with man and work back to the Scriptures

i) The goal is to address felt needs by taking a poll and preaching what people want to hear.

ii) An example:

(1) The title: "How to Deepen Your Relationships"

(2) The first principle: "You have to overlook offenses"

(3) Perhaps a verse is quoted

– James 5:20 (wrong interpretation)

– Proverbs 19:11

(4) A compelling story illustrating the power of the principle is given and how it applies to your personal relationships.

(5) You walk away saying, "That guy is funny yet knowledgeable; it was exciting and practical. I was uplifted and I was a little challenged. I like this church. I like this preacher."

(6) Result: cliché Christianity

b) Sermons that are shorter and easier contribute to:

i) a misunderstanding of the true biblical content.

ii) misapplication.

iii) superficial application, but no inner-man change.

iv) lowering the bar.

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(1) Seminaries and colleges are telling people to bring it down to where people are.

(2) This isn't how learning takes place.

(3) They are willing to change content.

(4) The defense is that it is merely a style issue, but content always goes sooner or later.

6. What are the marks of biblical exposition?

a) The text is the content of the sermon (1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2).

b) The interpretation comes from the grammar, syntax, and context.

c) The meaning of the text is clear.

d) The author's intent and manner comes through the preacher.

e) The implications come directly from the text itself.

f) The force of God's authority comes out in the preaching.

g) The whole counsel is given (2 Tim 3:16).

h) The hope for change is based upon the confrontation of truth with worldview and idolatries.

i) The goal is clarity, not creativity.

j) The result is no fence-sitters.

i) Even new believers will find it a thrill when they hear it taught.

ii) Those with no appetite will complain that the teaching isn't practical, relevant, it isn't relating to their lives, it isn't helpful, it's discouraging, boring, and intellectual.

iii) Listeners have the responsibility to be Bereans and cultivate discernment (Acts 17:10–11).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 6: EXPOSITORY PREACHING
Study 3: Problems with Contemporary Methods

"Many preachers, for example, indulge habitually in what they call expository sermons. They take a passage from Scripture and, proceeding on the assumption that the people attending the church that morning are deeply concerned about what the passage means, they spend their half hour or more on historical exposition of the verse or chapter, ending with some appended practical applications to the auditors. Could any procedure be more surely predestined to dullness and futility? Who seriously supposes that, as a matter of fact, one in a hundred of the congregation cares, to start with, what Moses, Isaiah, Paul, or John meant in those special verses, or came to church deeply concerned about it? Nobody else who talks to the public so assumes that the vital interests of the people are located in the meaning of words spoken two thousand years ago."[1]

Liberal ideologies put man at the center of the preaching event. We are told that if you aren't packaging teaching in a way that gains an immediate audience response, then you are not really an effective teacher.

Bible passages for study:

2 Tim 4:3	2 Tim 3:17	Rom 1:18–21	Luke 4
Matt 18	Eph 4	Col 3	Matt 7:23–24
1 Thess 2:13	Rom 10:17	1 Cor 1:18	Rom 1:16
2 Tim 4:1–3			

1. Modern preaching focuses on what people want to hear (2 Tim 4:3).

a) This approach to preaching is rooted historically in the teaching of Harry Emerson Fosdick, which could be summed up in the following propositions:

i) People know what is best for them.

ii) People automatically want what is best for them.

iii) People genuinely want to hear the truth.

iv) People reject truth because of the way we present it.

v) People will listen if we change our approach.

b) This view militates against the reality that God speaks authoritatively and makes the listeners accountable for their response.

i) Relevancy and freshness is the goal.

[1] Harry Emerson Fosdick, "What Is the Matter with Preaching?" in Mike Graves, ed. *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 9.

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ii) Authenticity becomes the ultimate trump card.

(1) The focus is on the packaging, not the content.

(2) The listener and what he wants take central stage in determining the content of the sermon.

(3) The reality is that this is nothing more than marketing strategy.

2. Two influences that have driven modern preaching

a) A fearful response to the growing presence of evil around a historically conservative culture. The church has been concerned with losing influence in the culture.

i) The church in America has historically enjoyed peace in the culture (not that this means there has been spiritual vitality).

(1) In post-World War II America, the "gospel" became "you can do whatever you want to do."

(2) Democracy, freedom, and prosperity were the primary tenets.

(3) People went to church, and Christianity became associated and lumped in with this false gospel message.

(4) In the midst of this, however, there was never a decline of evil.

ii) The culture in America is becoming increasingly hostile to the true gospel. Today 2 Timothy 3:1–7 is in full measure.

(1) Difficult times of hostility and opposition are promised to the church (v. 1).

(2) Society disintegrates as the love and fear of God disappears (vv. 2–4).

(3) The church (using the word loosely) is full of those who hold to a form of godliness, but deny its power.

– There is a denial of the necessity of stumbling over a sovereign Savior and a bloody cross.

– If people are gathering together to hear what they want to hear, people will chafe at the authority of God's Word.

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– The only way for pulpits that are giving people what they want to hear to be shut down is for Christianity to cost you something.

– There is a sentimental desire to "go back to the way things used to be" when we were filling stadiums and people were going to conferences and churches were full.

b) There is a perpetual desire to lower the bar.

i) The answer to apathy and a lack of appetite is claimed to be to lower the bar.

ii) This is seen across culture—even in schools today.

iii) This goes against all rational thinking where the whole point of equipping and learning is to move from a place where you are to where to you need to be.

iv) The truth about man's condition is that he needs truth to challenge and rescue him from his sinful mindset (Rom 1:18–21).

3. Much training of preachers focuses on the listener.

a) The needs of the listener are considered sovereign. The listener has the authority.

b) How do assess your own needs?

c) What do you want to hear?

d) This fosters bad hermeneutics because the focus becomes going to Scripture to find answers to the questions people are asking.

4. Some pastors misuse Scripture to validate their felt needs preaching model.

a) Luke 4:16–22 is used as a proof text that Jesus was focused on meeting the felt needs of His hearers.

i) Jesus begins teaching in the synagogue (vv. 16–17).

ii) Jesus identifies Himself as the fulfillment of the promised Messianic ministry as recorded in Isaiah (vv. 18–21).

iii) Jesus almost gets thrown off a cliff after the people listening are filled with rage at His teaching (vv. 28–30).

b) But the entire context is ignored by this modern interpretation.

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i) The catchwords become the focus and are transported into our immediate context: poor, captives, blind, oppressed (i.e., burdened and downtrodden).

ii) The conclusion is drawn that Jesus is encouraging people and focusing on relieving their burdens (i.e., felt needs). He touched upon what they wanted to hear.

iii) The context is completely violated. The takeaway according to these interpretations is that Jesus was an effective communicator.

iv) The claim then is that if I meet people where they are (as it is claimed that Jesus did) then I will have a full church and be an effective communicator.

5. Two devastating assumptions that put an unnecessary burden on the preacher:

a) People have innate needs that must be met in order for people to reach "wholeness."

b) We are to assume that everyone has spiritual inclinations toward what is best. It isn't a heart problem that prevents people from accessing preaching, but it is external, environmental problems that keep them from truth.

c) Example: forgiveness

i) In this model, the listener is assumed to be good. So the preaching about motivations for forgiveness becomes:

(1) You don't want someone else "renting space" in your mind.

(2) You will be destroyed if you let bitterness control you.

ii) The sinful inclinations of the heart are undealt with.

iii) The motivation for forgiveness (i.e., exemplifying the forgiveness you have received) is ignored (Matt 18:21–35; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).

6. What about people's appetite for faithful exposition?

a. Many people don't have an appetite.

i) People spend their time cultivating an appetite for television and movies all week.

ii) People crave humor and light messages.

iii) People are used to snippets from online posts and social media.

iv) People complain about inaccessibility.

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(1) People consider biblical terminology and substantive preaching as inaccessible.

(2) When someone says, "I can't understand those words," it's not that they can't, but that they won't. They aren't willing to work at the most basic level to learn something.

v) Yet even brand new Christians love God's truth and can access biblical preaching.

b) The desire to talk about theology is not an indicator of appetite.

i) People love to debate topics.

ii) People love to talk about theology.

iii) Matthew 7:21–23 is concerning in light of our current evangelical subculture.

iv) When you open the pages of Scripture and go deeply into a passage, many times people will begin to shut it out.

v) People want practical counseling advice, but when it comes to walking through a passage, they don't want to hear it

vi) You can tell a lot about people based upon where they go and what preaching they sit under.

c) Pastors must model exposition to help cultivate an appetite for exposition.

7. Satan's schemes against the power of faithful preaching are many.

a) Satan finds subtle ways to attack the authority of Scripture because this is where the power for change exists (1 Thess 2:13). Satan works against this to undermine:

– the power of the Scripture.

– the faith of individuals in the power of the Scripture.

– the commitment that believers have to one another in body life.

– the clarity of authoritative, propositional truth coming from the pulpit.

– the hearers' awareness of his obligation to truth every time he hears it, regardless of how he feels about it.

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– the heralding of God's Word with the force and weight and conscience-binding implications that God ordained it to have.

– the boldness that Christians ought to have in order to silence them by labeling them as critical or narrow or bigoted.

– the accountability that men have for the content that they preach and write and speak and blog about.

b) Satan's schemes in the last half century have brought in new approaches to preaching (e.g., story-telling preaching, dialoging, surface-level teaching, etc.). Satan accomplishes his plan by feeding lies to the evangelical church:

– You shouldn't have to come under the oppressive authority of a preacher.

– You can't know for sure what God meant by what He said.

– People have less ability to understand literature and verbal communication as we have become a visual culture.

– Story-telling preaching is a more accessible approach to communicating truth.

– Human experience holds the authority for change, and everyone's voice matters equally.

– As an individual I am in a position to judge truth.

8. Faithful expositors are protected by the very truth that Satan attempts to undermine. God has already anticipated Satan's attack and has given instructions for conducting ministry.

i) The conviction that faith comes only by hearing the Word, and that nothing else transforms men (Rom 10:17)

ii) The same preaching will be foolishness to some, and to others the power of God (1 Cor 1:18).

iii) The gospel itself is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16).

iv) The ministry of proclamation must happen in season and out of season, regardless of appetite and unaltered by audience response (2 Tim 4:1–3).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 6: EXPOSITORY PREACHING
Study 4: The Power of the Word of God in Expository Preaching

The testimony of the Word of God is that it alone is objective. Clarity comes from yielding to objective truth from God.

Bible passages for study:

2 Tim 3:16–17 John 17:17 Ps 19:7–14 1 Cor 1:2

1. Today's typical approach to preaching is subjective and experiential.

a) Create a list of topics that I want to teach about.

b) Find where the key words appear in the Bible that go along with my series.

c) Develop a message around the theme of those words.

d) Disregard the authors' intent or context, but have something practical and relevant that goes along with the topic I wanted to teach about.

e) To teach a principle authoritatively that is not from a text means that the authority lies with the preacher now.

f) Example: a series on prayer that uses Matthew 18:20 on prayer meetings.

– The principle is fine, but not from that passage.

– Now you strip Matthew 18:15–20 of its context, meaning, and authority from that passage.

– If you miss a passage in this way, it will not have its sanctifying power in your life.

2. But the nature of the Word of God is powerful and transforming.

a) Scripture is sufficient to transform (2 Tim 3:16–17).

b) Truth is exclusive as an instrument of change in the life of the believer (John 17:17).

c) The law of God does not bend, and it allows you to see your soul from God's perspective.

d) The testimony of the Lord is sure. It is stable as to its divine wisdom (Ps 19:7–14).

e) With faith and yieldedness to the regulations of God, you will illumination so as to be able to spiritually appraise with clarity. We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 1: The Family That God Blesses

Satan and the culture want to destroy the family with a consuming self-absorption. You'll probably get very little help from evangelicalism. As we've seen, it doesn't seem to matter what the issue is in the life of the believer and the Word of God, evangelicalism seems bent on dumbing it down, making it shallow, eliminating any requirement or any demand altogether. The standard in evangelicalism for what it means to lead a family is grossly lacking in biblical clarity, depth, and power.

When we talk about leadership in the family, we have to get more fundamental than being a blessing to your wife; we have to talk about whether our life is blessed by God or not. Psalm 128 indicates that there is fulfillment, satisfaction, and blessedness that come when certain conditions are met.

Bible passages for study:

Ps 128 Ps 127 1 Pet 5:5 Isa 66:2

There are two prerequisites for enjoying God's blessing on your family.

1. Fear the Lord (Ps 128:1a).

a) Reasons

i) Because God created the family

(1) You must realize that the family is not a human institution, but something designed and created by God.

(2) The only hope you have in this culture to stay the course is to hold God's perspective on the family.

ii) Because God gives family (Ps 127:3)

(1) Family is a gift from God.

(2) Family is not a right.

(3) Family in our culture is treated like a burden, but we must realize that it is gift from God.

iii) Because God builds the family (Ps 127:1)

You can read all the books on family you like, but if you build without God's material, or if God does not bless your family, it will not truly be "built" (i.e., have blessing and strength that only God can give).

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b) Description

i) Be careful not to offend Him.

(1) You must know what offends him (1 Pet 5:5).

(2) You must know what it means to dishonor Him.

ii) Be eager to please and esteem Him.

(1) You must know what pleases Him.

(2) You must know what honors Him

(3) You must know what brings His gaze (Isa 66:2).

2. Walk in His ways (Ps 128:1b).

a) Description

i) Teach your family the truth with the purpose of obeying it.

ii) Answer all questions with truth.

b) Result

i) A spiritually blessed husband (128:2, 4)

ii) A spiritually fruitful wife (128:3a)

iii) Spiritually beneficial children (128:3b)

Questions Every Father and Husband Should Ask

1. Am I pursuing the blessedness that comes from the hand of God alone?

2. What are the prerequisites for blessedness on my leadership?

3. Do I trust in the security and provision of Almighty God for what I am about to do today?

4. Am I laying it before Him as the only One who can build and guard my home?

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 2: Reversing the Curse in Marriage

Leading in the home according to the Scriptures may seem radical and over the top, but it is clearly biblical and how it ought to be for every man who names the name of Christ. We want to cover what it means for a man to bring a redemptive influence to his relationship with his wife.

Even in the grace of the Lord Jesus, the battle is not over. In fact, it's just beginning. Yet the victory is won. We're no longer in bondage, the Scriptures say. You can't, as a Christian man, assume that it is impossible or that you can't overcome the sinful struggles you're facing in marriage. Every Christian man can grow in these things. To say you cannot overcome is to depreciate the power of Christ through His Spirit. God has given you the mind and power of Christ to subdue the old sinful tendencies. We can't make excuses as men. We are called to live in such a redemptive way that the curse is reversed in the marriage context. We are called to show Christ's power to redeem, to yield to the Spirit of God, and to gain victory as God intends.

Bible passages for study:

Eph 5:22–6:9 1 Pet 3:7 1 Tim 5:14–15 Rom 5

Ephesians 5:22–6:9 unfolds under the governing verbal idea of verse 21 so that we know how we are to subject ourselves to Jesus Christ. If you are not leading the way it is described here, it is a problem with your relationship with Christ. It is not due to circumstances, people, environments, or your spouse. If you have a problem following these verses, it is because you haven't owned verse 21 in some key ways. Christ is calling us to submit ourselves to Him in fear.

Following are principles for redemptive leadership in marriage.

1. Offer yourself for your wife as Christ did for the church (Eph 5:25).

a) Initiate love for her welfare, as Christ did.

i) This passage in vv. 25–33 is calling you to be willing to love in manner and extent like Christ.

(1) Manner: in the same manner He did the day "He gave Himself up" (v. 25) and "while we were enemies" (Rom 5:10)

(2) Extent: willing to go as far as it takes to secure her holiness (Eph 5:27)

ii) Christ never tolerated us; He loved us lavishly despite who we were.

b) Sacrifice personal privileges and interests, as Christ did.

i) Your leadership in your home is not about you or your happiness. It's not about how hard it is to live with someone with severe weakness.

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ii) It is about reversing the curse by the power of the Spirit and putting Christ's power on display for the sake of gospel outreach through your home life.

c) Love her when she is least spiritually lovely, as Christ did.

d) Demonstrate patience and forgiveness toward her, as Christ did.

2. Live with your wife in an understanding way (1 Pet 3:7).

Men who are struggling in their marriage or leadership don't realize that the change is very simple. It's not as though there is a massive complexity to their problem. Sometimes, it is as simple as believing that God will sanctify your own heart and your wife's life.

a) Think carefully about your influence.

b) Think carefully about God's design for her.

i) She is not a man.

ii) She is a nurturer.

iii) She is vulnerable (1 Pet 3:7; 1 Tim 5:14–15).

c) Think carefully about who she is uniquely as a woman.

i) Where is she spiritually?

ii) What are her weaknesses?

iii) What fears plague her?

iv) What background affects her?

d) Think carefully about how well you listen.

i) Take a genuine interest.

ii) Take responsibility for your response.

e) Think carefully about how to honor her.

i) All wives share in common grace.

ii) Believing wives share in special grace.

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iii) Wives bring fruitfulness that men can't replicate.

3. If you are a "fixer," attack that problem.

a) Overcome the habit of "fixing" by being silent and listening more.

b) Don't give quick instruction. Slow yourself down. Ponder and think about God's design of the woman and the unique struggles and burdens of a woman.

c) If God were to put you behind the eyes and mind of your wife for thirty seconds, to see how she sees burdens, it might embarrass you how little you know about your wife, because you don't pay attention to those things as you ought.

Questions

1. What drives you most and therefore causes the greatest amount of conflict between you and your wife?

2. What expectation causes the greatest conflict when it goes unmet?

3. Have you given yourself up for your wife, or do you still claim time for yourself or isolate yourself from her as though you were single?

4. Do you give her time and attention only when it is convenient for you?

5. How much of your trouble in your relationship is related, not to your wife's sin, but to your unwillingness to offer yourself, and you are simply reaping the consequences of it?

6. When your wife betrays a role that God has given her, does your mind gravitate toward how God forgave you for failures with His commands?

7. For single men—In what areas in any of my relationships am I presently self-absorbed?

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 3: Cultivating Forgiveness in the Home

Men typically tend to resolve conflict in a way that wouldn't honor Christ or build up one another. We typically resolve conflicts by overpowering. If you become good at manipulating by your sheer maleness, then the command to become a compassionate and merciful forgiver is going to be neglected in your life and home. This pattern will devastate your Christian life and your testimony, but to an even greater extent, your marriage. Forgiveness is key. If you don't love mercy and learn to forgive, your intimate walk with the Father will be harmed and your conscience will be bludgeoned. The greatest gift you can give to your wife and family is to be like Jesus Christ. You are most like Christ when you forgive.

In this study, we will examine:

– Cultivating mercy and compassion for forgiveness

– Overcoming the tendency to neglect true reconciliation with those who have sinned against us

Bible passages for study:

Eph 4:32	Col 3:13	Luke 17:1–5	Matt 18:21–35
Gal 6:1–5	Rom 5:2		

Cultivating Mercy and Compassion for Forgiveness

1. The definition of forgiveness

a) The most common word group for forgiveness in the New Testament is the word that means "to release, let go" (*aphíemi*).

b) The second word group (*charízomai*) means "to give graciously, freely pardon."

c) Forgiveness means complete release with extravagant/lavish mercy.

d) What are we being asked to release when we forgive another person?

i) We can't pardon people from their sins. Only God can deal with the fact of a person's guilt before Him.

ii) We can't release them from divine consequences.

iii) We are called to release them from any personal right over them.

iv) They no longer have to settle an account with the offended human party. The debt of wrongdoing has been released.

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2. The practice of forgiveness

a) Forgive as compassionately as Christ (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).

b) Forgive as often as you are sinned against (Luke 17:1–5).

c) Forgive from the heart (Matt 18:21–35).

i) By remembering your incredible debt

ii) By remembering His incredible compassion

3. Know when to confront sin (Gal 6:1–5).

a) If I speak up, will it hinder my ability to be long-suffering?

b) Am I spiritually mature enough to restore?

Overcoming the Tendency to Neglect True Reconciliation with Those Who Have Sinned Against Us

1. Does our forgiveness parallel "positional" or "parental" forgiveness?

a) When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, then on the basis of Christ's payment, God forgives our unpayable debt to Him.

b) He judicially sets our account so that we owe nothing now nor will we ever owe anything in the future.

c) He could rightfully expect payment in full; yet, though we would spend an eternity in hell, the debt we owe could not ever be paid.

d) On that ground alone, then, we stand in a permanent state of grace (Rom 5:2). We are judicially/positionally forgiven of all sin for all eternity. Whether we confess our sin or not, those who stand in Christ stand forever covered by the righteousness of Christ.

e) We may not acknowledge a particular sin or even repent of it, but God extends to us complete pardon from sin's penalty and payment on the sole basis of Christ's finished work.

f) To suggest that I must forgive in the same way God forgives would assume that I can forgive once for all time. This is an untenable concept.

i) God provided His own all-sufficient sacrifice, through which He pardons permanently on that ground alone.

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ii) When someone sins against me, I have no sacrifice of my own on which to ground my forgiveness; therefore, my forgiveness is not exactly like God's forgiveness.

iii) Jesus' parable in Matthew 18:23–35 teaches the very opposite of "conditional forgiveness" between two people who stand in a permanent state of forgiving grace. Jesus' points:

(1) Because believers have received full pardon though the sufficient sacrifice of the King, they must lavish that same mercy upon all comparatively miniscule "debts" incurred by other servants of the King.

(2) Because we always stand in the permanent state of forgiving grace, we should immediately and lavishly pardon on every debt owed to us, whether petitioned or not.

2. Do we forgive others because of our full pardon in Christ, or because they ask?

a) Some maintain that another's repentance is a "condition" they must meet before we grant forgiveness.

b) On what grounds are they released? Christ? The offended party's sense of justice?

c) In other words, if I'm to forgive in the same "conditional" way that God does, wouldn't I be assuming two things?

i) I have the same authority and right to demand the meeting of the "condition."

ii) The debt owed to me is the same as that which is owed to God.

3. Do we actually "release" others from their obligation to God?

a) We do not judicially forgive anyone.

b) We have no power to absolve or cleanse sin in the same way God has done with us.

c) When we release others from their personal debt of injury to us (*aphíēmi*—"to release"), we are expressing the kind of forgiveness we enjoy every moment of each day as we stand in the grace of Christ.

d) Even before an offender asks for forgiveness (for we stand permanently forgiven even when we don't seek it), and even if they never ask, we are to release that person from our personal right to judge.

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e) Matthew 18 demonstrates that we do not hold the same position as God when someone owes us a personal debt of injury, and the debt of injury owed to us is far different than the one we owed to God.

4. We are called to demonstrate the restoring/reconciling expression of forgiveness. How?

a) When someone injures you, offends you, owes you restitution, you:

i) Release them from personal liability to yourself.

ii) You forgive them the offense.

iii) They owe you nothing personally.

iv) You will treat them as if you expect no personal payment.

b) If they refuse to acknowledge their sin (both as against you and against God), then:

i) We cannot experience the fullness of fellowship, communion, and joy until we repent; thus others cannot as well.

ii) They have broken communion with you because they have sinned against the relationship built upon mutual love and fellowship, and they have also sinned against God because it is His holy presence that is offended by the sins of men.

iii) In order to experience full reconciliation of the broken relationships, there must be an acknowledgment and confession of sin.

c) When you have already forgiven them by releasing them from their personal debt to you as an expression of God's judicial pardoning of us, then all that is left to be concerned with are these two very important components:

i) Their broken relationship with God (which you are now a part of helping them to restore).

ii) Their broken communion with you—not because you demand a payment personally (that's been forgiven)—but because mending with you is their primary means by which they restore communion with God.

When the offender comes to you and desires to acknowledge the offense, they are moving toward purity and holiness in their lives. They are not making a payment to you on a debt owed to you for they owe you nothing (you have no authority or right to hold anything against them). But because God wants His children to love one another and to treat each other with kindness, then they need to be restored to you that they might once again be pleasing to God.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 4: Peacemaking in the Home

God has created unity in us by the Spirit. We are to preserve, protect, and guard that unity. It doesn't matter how many years you have botched those things, you can repair, renew, and grow. But if a person is not willing to do that after years of destroying those things, it is only a commentary on why those things are destroyed. It may be an unwillingness to admit stubbornness, or it may be that you just don't admit that you have a hardened idolatry of self.

Bible passages for study:

Rom 12:13–18	Col 3:15	Jas 3:18	Jas 4:1–4
Heb 12:11	Eph 4:15, 25–29	Prov 27:17	Rom 8:28
Heb 4:12–13	Eph 1:17–18	Col 1:9–12	Mark 10:18
Gal 6:1	1 Tim 1:15	Ps 86	

Romans 12:18 tells us to "be at peace with all men." Colossians 3:15 tells us to "let the peace of Christ rule [*brabeúō*] in your hearts." "Rule" means to arbitrate, act like a judge. Sometimes it is used for an official who acted as an umpire for a competition. The peace of Christ is referee over conflicts within the church and in the family.

1. Ways that we try to solve relational issues by unbiblical means

    a) Manipulation—This is a deceptive tactic that seeks to avoid the perspective of others. It is a deception whatever means you might use:

        i) Withholding information

        ii) Shading information in your favor

        iii) Blatantly lying or exaggerating

    b) Intimidation—Instead of solving conflicts, you just shout someone down, or dominate by your presence, and you become comfortable by being aggressive in relationships.

    c) Isolation—This is the pursuit of relational distance. Commonly, this manifests itself in silence. This tactic seeks to make people pay by giving them cold indifference.

2. Evidences you are trying to solve relational issues by unbiblical means

    a) The results you produce are false.

    b) It's weakening you and making you atrophy over time.

    c) Your marriage will have little relational harmony.

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d) There will be very little real peace when you aren't actually dealing with the conflict.

e) Later in life you might say, "We just grew apart."

i) You didn't grow apart; you walked apart.

ii) You separated yourself.

iii) You must go back and think that through and confess, and let the Lord become the new umpire of your conflicts and your difficulties, both in your heart and in your relationships.

3. At the heart are two basic idolatries.

a) We might believe the lie that God is not sovereign. Instead of trusting in the sovereign work of God and trusting Him to bring about a biblical solution, we take matters into our own hands.

b) We might think that superficial unity is sufficient. This idolatry takes comfort in the lie that we can be content with a fake unity. Obedience demands that we strive for actual, biblical love that denies self (Jas 3:18; Heb 12:11). Superficial unity is not biblical unity.

i) It is a human, manufactured, self-centered, and self-preserving peace.

ii) It is always temporary. It never lasts.

iii) It gives people a false sense of peace, and Christ is not involved in it at all.

iv) In the end, it dishonors Christ and never promotes the gospel.

v) We are called, as Christians, to the opposite of this. We are called to engage conflict. We are to engage it in such a way that Christ becomes honored through the difficulty. On the other side of it, we learn to endure and become more selfless.

4. Distinguishing between conflict and disagreement

a) Normal, natural disagreement doesn't involve sin.

b) Conflict occurs wherever sin enters into the disagreement.

c) Conflict can be avoided (Jas 4:1–4), whereas disagreement cannot.

i) Some people actually believe you can live in relationships without disagreements.

ii) Disagreements are a part of life because we are finite, weak, limited and earthly.

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iii) Disagreements should be expected, and they don't have to turn into sinful conflicts.

iv) Christians can have a right attitude. They can avoid sinful idolatries that move us into conflict.

5. Causes of strong disagreement are not necessarily sinful.

a) Disagreement can be due to differences in our:

i) Worldview

ii) Responses to circumstances

iii) View of money

iv) Maturity

b) Did sin occur between Paul and Barnabas when they split over John Mark (Acts 15:36–41)?

i) It doesn't seem to be that either one of them have any sense in which they knew they were sinning.

ii) They didn't divide the church.

iii) It wasn't as though everyone knew that an apostle and his sidekick were somehow sinning against one another. There was none of that.

iv) There are sharp disagreements over philosophy of ministry and men parting, but they are not for one another. If you are really parting over things you disagree strongly about, but there is no sin involved, the only thing you can say is, "I still sharply disagree with what you are saying and the reasons behind it. I don't think it will be effective. I think it might be hurtful. But I support you. I absolutely am thrilled for our friendship and ministry relationship because you are a faithful guy."

6. Benefits of disagreement

a) You get to rethink your under-developed perspective (Prov 27:17).

b) You get to trust God at a new level (Rom 8:28).

c) You are exposed to your own sinfulness.

d) You get to search the Scriptures (Heb 4:12–13).

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e) You get to pray for understanding (Eph 1:17–18; Col 1:9–12).

f) You are forced to communicate more effectively.

g) You get the opportunity to die to self.

"Quarrels put us in hostility with God in the James 4 sense. Two people are sinful and fighting for what they want, or one person is speaking biblically and the other is fighting for what they want. God's pleasure is what we must desire. What does God want from this circumstance? We must lay our own desires down. God wants control of our desires."

7. In disagreements, we must speak truth in love (Eph 4:15). Ephesians 4:25–29 teaches us principles of truth-telling.

a) We must lay aside all falsehood and speak truth (v. 25).

i) Speak truth without exaggeration.

ii) It is not easy to slip into sin when standing on truth.

b) Do not get angry, because if personally offended, you will sin (v. 26). We can hate the things that God hates, but His pure and completely righteous anger is not possible for us.

i) The sin of anger is a destructive element that creates fear in families.

ii) If you are personally offended, it is not righteous anger. You must work toward forgiveness if you are personally offended.

iii) Forgive and stand for God.

c) Don't be self-absorbed. Stop stealing from the relationship for self-fulfillment (v. 28).

d) Our speech should be wholesome (v. 29).

i) It should be wholesome without qualification.

ii) Build up in the moment.

iii) Be sensitive to the range of needs by the other person.

iv) Being hurtful in speech is always sin, no matter what is said to us.

v) If personally offended, there is no option but to forgive.

8. Guarding against falling into sin when disagreeing

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a) Keep in mind that I am never better (Rom 12:16).

b) Take heed of your own heart (Gal 6:1).

c) God is the standard, not me (Mark 10:18).

d) Be humble as the worse sinner (1 Tim 1:15).

e) Pray for the Lord to be patient with your brother and you (Ps 86).

f) Remember, God is sovereign and He is allowing this circumstance for you.

"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?" (Matt 7:1–4).

Questions

1. Do you trust the Lord to establish and maintain peace in your relationships, or do you resort to self-made tactics? When you attempt to fabricate peace in relationships, which sinful tactics do you gravitate toward?

2. Do you imagine that you have no area of thinking that can be more fully developed by disagreement? Did you reach a point where you stopped developing?

3. Are you tempted to believe that there are irreconcilable differences between believers?

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 5: The Heart of Anger

In this study we will examine how the male leader of the home tends toward anger in the family. Namely, his frustration with life's circumstances turns sinful when he exhibits anger at the things that do not anger God.

Bible passages for study:

Prov 19:19	Prov 20:3	Prov 22	Prov 20:25
Prov 25:28	Eph 4:25–30	Col 3:8	Jas 1:19–20
Prov 29:15	Prov 13:24	Ps 32	Prov 28:13
Eph 5	Ps 51		

We will look at anger from a number of angles, including: What does Proverbs have to say about anger? What does Paul have to say about anger? What attitudes are behind anger? What is the first indication of repentance from anger?

The wisdom literature in Proverbs has much to say about anger. Much of it is proximity language, which warns us to stay away from angry people.

1. Proverbs 19:19—Stay away from angry people. Anger becomes habitual. Angry people operate in everyday arenas of life and usually pay massive dividends for their out-of-control anger problems.

2. Proverbs 20:3—It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from an angry person because an angry person will quarrel. The angry person is a fool. The Bible has strong language for those who cannot control their anger. They are foolish because they try to control life and they think they are captains of their own destiny. When they fail in their attempts to control, they spew out anger. Those nearby experience wounds and scars.

3. Proverbs 22:24–25—Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man. Specifically, don't make a friendship out of the relationship and spend time with them as a common association. Do not live by their ethics. You must get away from them. You cannot excuse it. They will drag you into their trouble. These are unrepentant, sinfully angry people.

4. Proverbs 25:28—A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls: he is without stability or protection.

The apostle Paul shows us that righteous anger is possible and necessary to manifest the character of God. It is normal and necessary as a Christian is maturing to display righteous anger. The things God hates we also are to despise. Unholy things should cause us to be indignant, especially when those unholy things are in our lives.

1. God's wrath in anger is always displayed righteously and perfectly. We cannot always be perfectly righteous in our anger.

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2. Ephesians 4:26—You should not exercise any sinful anger, but be angry and do not sin. When Christians get angry, they must make a distinction between sinful and righteous anger.

a) When anger rises up, it should never turn into personal anger over personal things.

b) If you let it become personal, you will give Satan an opportunity to destroy (Eph 4:27).

3. Ephesians 4:25—Put away falsehood; speak truth, and if there is any anger, it should result in building up the body and not tearing down.

a) Righteous anger must be about the right things.

b) Righteous anger results in righteous responses. Do we recognize the difference?

i) When we have experienced righteous anger, we probably don't recognize it very much. As we mature in our Christian walk, there should be growth.

ii) Much of the time we are acting in sinful ways, so when we act righteously, we may not immediately recognize it.

iii) As you examine your life, you will learn to be sensitive to sin patterns. With a sharper conscience, you will learn how to reject the lies of sinful anger.

iv) Sinful or righteous? Righteous anger never violates any part of God's Word. You are thinking God's thoughts. In the moment you are despising what God despises.

c) When someone blasphemes God overtly, it is easy to see how we can be righteously angry. In personal relationships we run into trouble because we are personally involved. Our involvement blurs the line between being righteously indignant over sin and feeling personally offended.

d) Ephesians 4:31—We must put away "all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander … [and] all malice." These are a collection of terms of what goes on in the heart when we have been selfish. Throw them off (cf. Col 3:8; Jas 1:20)!

What attitudes are behind anger?

1. Self-absorption/self-centeredness

a) In a family dynamic, it is the love of one's own way. Anger pours out when people get in the way of your desires.

b) You are self-absorbed in your idolatries that make you feel comfortable. Then, when someone threatens to get in the way of them, you react in anger to protect what you idolize.

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2. The denial of God's sovereignty

a) Refusing to submit to what the Scriptures teach about God's sovereign control over your life

b) In a tense situation, we often become frustrated with circumstances.

i) It is a normal part of life. It doesn't necessarily mean we are angry.

ii) It simply means the circumstances are challenging or are an obstacle.

(1) Circumstances can hinder our desires and plans.

(2) Hindrances simply require adjustments.

c) Other times frustration with circumstances is sinful anger.

i) This occurs in the moment of frustration when the heart and mind conclude that I have a right to something, and this hindrance is preventing me from getting what I deserve.

ii) It is no longer a desire (e.g., "I want my children to obey"). Anger results when we think we have a right to demand something.

iii) You have defiantly moved yourself into the position of the Sovereign.

iv) To be sinfully angry is to defy God's control of all things. Circumstances are for God to control.

The first indication of repentance from anger is confession to God and to our family.

1. Confession in the New Testament is to acknowledge what God says is holiness, sin, and obedience. Being specific is helpful to indict myself and acknowledge what God says about my sin.

2. Honest confession before God means we are honest toward others whom we harm.

a) Willing transparency with people is the mark of being honest before God.

b) We are not going to be perfect, but it must be a growing pattern in our lives.

3. Believe in the promise of God that He will be compassionate. Scars may still exist as children may be slow to trust.

4. Even if you outwardly obey, be quick to address your heart. Repent of the things that no one sees. Speak truth to your inner man. Cherish God's Word in your heart, so you might not sin (Ps 119:11).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 6: Fathers in the Home

God sovereignly creates a family unit when a man and woman leave their parents and join together in a one-flesh marriage. God's design for marriage normally results in the birth of children. In His design, fathers are called to lead the family according to biblical principles. We will examine the biblical mandates as they relate to the forming of the father's character and convictions as he leads in the home. The father's character impacts his wife, his children, and the ultimate success of the family unit.

Bible passages for study:

Jas 1:9–11	1 Cor 10:13	Eph 6:4	Prov 22:6
Deut 6	Luke 17	Eph 6:13–17	Mark 10:44
Phil 3:17	Ps 119:97–104	2 Pet 1	Heb 12

Six character principles

Character Principle #1: Trusting in the Sovereignty of God

Your faith must be grounded in trusting that God is sovereign—and I am not.

1. God works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11).

2. God's sovereignty should affect all our thoughts and responses (Ps 115:3).

3. Faith is tested in God-ordained trials.

a) He stretches and strengthens faith; producing endurance (Jas 1).

b) Tests always produce stamina when you are persuaded that God's planned outcome is always for our best and always for His glory.

c) God is always faithful as He stretches a believer and sovereignly controls the parameters to produce more faith. He does not desire to crush your faith; He is in fact protecting your faith.

Character Principle #2: Seeing Leadership in the Home As a Stewardship

As stewards, this is our one opportunity to generationally pass on through our teaching and leadership in the home.

1. We teach our children to "love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:5). The goal is the generational worship of God as He has revealed Himself.

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2. Only God can change the heart, but you, as a father, bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. It is a male responsibility (Eph 6:4).

3. As a father, your presence in the home should be predictable.

a) Don't toy with your family or throw money at problems when your time and attention is needed.

b) If you can't be there, your family should be grounded in the knowledge that you want to be there above all else.

4. When men abdicate their role, women take over out of fear.

a) Roles are reversed.

b) It is disastrous to sons when fathers neglect their family. The absentee father is a tragic loss for children.

5. Proverbs 22:6 is not a promise from God, but a generally true biblical instruction.

Character Principle #3: Believing in God's Word

Tragically, even in the church, men abandon their families and their responsibilities. This tragic state can all be traced back to a lack of faith in the Word of God. In Luke 17:6 Jesus says a small amount of faith is powerful. What would a great amount do?

1. A father must be grounded in Ephesians 6:13–17. This is the armor of God. We must know the truth and believe it no matter what.

a) Take up responsibilities and resist a wayward path (v. 13).

b) Stand firmly girded in truthfulness (v. 14). This is the integrity of a clean life.

c) Be urgently ready and prepared with your feet under you (v. 15).

d) Notice that the verb changes toward action: "taking up, take" (vv. 16–17). The effect is described as destroying flaming temptations.

i) The shield is for defense. The shield is your faith.

ii) The sword is speaking truth to yourself and others when there is sin around you.

2. There is no other way for a Christian to live; there is no moral truth in the world's system.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 6: Fathers in the Home

Character Principle #4: Living in Humility Before Your God

Fathers must be humble before God, before the cross, before the Savior, and before the people in your life. Mark 10:44 instructs that the greatest in the kingdom is the one who serves all.

1. Examine yourself regularly. Be honest in your assessment. Pray that the Lord will reveal your lack of humility to you so you may repent.

a) It is not common in our culture to use such self-indicting language.

b) Admitting sin in this area can be embarrassing, but confess we must.

c) Repentance requires honestly accepting that you have sinned.

d) Sin is sin, an offense to God. It is not a mistake. It is not someone else's fault.

2. Assess yourself rightly against the only standard, God's Word.

a) Humility is a healthy distrust of yourself.

b) It is not loathing or self-pity.

c) The humble servant dies to himself. You are called to give up on your own strength (Luke 14:11). You are called to take up your cross (Luke 9:23).

i) Imitate Christ, who emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave (Phil 2:7).

ii) Imitate Paul's example of dying to self and giving up liberties (1 Cor 9:15–27; Phil 3:17).

d) Hate every false way (Ps 119:97–104).

i) God's Word is our meditation (v. 97).

ii) His statutes, law, precepts, and ordinances guide and guard us every second (vv. 99–101).

(1) As a humble man, I admit that I have the power of the cross available to me, but I must deny my flesh.

(2) Dying to self is the most difficult part.

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(3) Moments of humble faith build and fortify our resistance to Satan's devices. He re-tools and comes back, but we are strengthened when we yield our will in obedience.

(4) Faith grows when we deny self and trust God (2 Pet 1:5–8).

3. Forgive offenses regularly and seek forgiveness for your offenses.

a) Go to the Lord and ask Him for forgiveness.

b) Ask for forgiveness from your wife and children.

c) Seeking forgiveness from your family serves several purposes:

– You model humility.

– Your family is encouraged to pray for specific needs.

– You open a path that encourages your children to seek your forgiveness.

– You teach your children to humbly confess to the Lord.

Character Principle #5: Being a Doer and Not Merely a Hearer of God's Word

The conviction at work in this principle is from James 1:19–25.

1. The mere hearer of God's Word

a) deludes himself.

b) allows his flesh to minimize the weight of God's Word.

2. A doer of God's Word

a) allows convictions to be formed as he makes an honest assessment of his life.

b) reads Scripture and sits under convicting sermons with a healthy introspection of his life.

c) allows God's Word to drive him to pray, confess, and repent.

Character Principle #6: Avoiding Exasperating Your Children

Scripture warns us not to embitter our families or exasperate children. We must be aware of the behaviors and tendencies that can exasperate children. Fathers beware!

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 7: SHEPHERDING FAMILIES
Study 6: Fathers in the Home

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4).

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart" (Col 3:21).

1. Hypocrisy in the home exasperates children.

    a) Setting standards of holiness that are biblical, but not submitting to them ourselves

    b) Setting personal standards at the same level as biblical standards

2. Spiritual neglect in the home exasperates children.

    a) The tendency toward neglect

        i) Fathers are often obsessed with their own hobbies and friends, thus sacrificing time with family.

        ii) Fathers avoid expressing love and affection. The need is intense from children, and neglect can crush children into despair.

        iii) Fathers avoid preparing to bring the Word of God to bear when instructing their children. When they are rebelling, it is too late to find a passage.

        iv) Months or years of spiritual neglect is often later followed by a sudden change in standards.

        v) Fathers often become more engaged when their children are adolescents after not being so involved in early years.

            (1) Guilt sets in and they try to make up for lost time.

            (2) Self-atonement philosophy is at work.

    b) Children need nurturing and grace from you as a careful parent (Eph 6:4).

    c) Fathers must be consistent in instruction and discipline.

        i) Learn to be consistent in tones and mood.

        ii) Be present in the home as the overseer and leader.

        iii) Ethics must be predictable and consistent.

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3. Permissiveness in the home exasperates children.

a) "A child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother" (Prov 29:15).

b) "He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently" (Prov 13:24).

c) Permissiveness

– allows children to rule the home.

– allows belligerence and rebellion by not addressing it with Scripture.

– fails to discipline when children are foolish and mouthy.

– fails to patiently bring the Word of God to bear on the current situation.

4. Upholding the righteous standard of God without extending the gospel exasperates children.

"Constantly upholding the standard of God without explaining and teaching your children that they need the saving grace of God in Christ that gives us the ability to obey exasperates children to hear the Law of God, but never know where or how to access the power to obey."

a) Children may have repetitive disobedience and they have guilt and frustration with failure.

b) Sometimes the parent is tempted to just repeat the Law without showing them the grace that is available from Christ.

c) Every time guilt and angst is weighing them down, don't just hammer in obedience without leading your child to run to the cross.

d) Suggest that your child pray and plead with Christ in these early testings for mercy and forgiveness.

i) Don't just assume their first profession of faith is sincere.

ii) Further tests may uncover false professions of faith. Such exposure is good in that it drives us back to prayer and evangelizing our children.

5. Parents' unwillingness to be transparent exasperates children.

a) Parents should be transparent and broken about their weaknesses and sin before their children.

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b) We must confess our sins against our children to our children. Confess your offense according to God's standard. Use self-indicting language that is consistent with God's Word.

c) Men are particularly slow to admit their faults because it is hard to be criticized.

i) Transparency requires confession.

ii) How else will we, with integrity, demonstrate and teach what our children should do?

6. Unresolved tension between parents exasperates children.

a) It models a disobedient way to deal with conflict.

b) It denies the redemptive power of the gospel.

c) It creates an atmosphere of hopelessness.

See Appendix: "Ungodly Dating Relationships: How to Avoid Getting Stung"

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 8: BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Study 1: The Building Blocks to Counseling and Discipling Others

This foundational study addresses some preliminary yet central concerns to biblical counseling. It will examine misconceptions, the goals of counseling, and the basis for it.

The principles found within this section on counseling and discipleship are a compilation of materials—some developed by Grace Immanuel Bible Church, Jupiter, FL, as well as many adaptations from the counseling materials of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, under the leadership of Dr. John MacArthur. We are deeply indebted to Dr. MacArthur and the pastoral team at Grace Community for their labors and biblical clarity through the years on this vital subject.

Bible passages for study:

Acts 20:31	Rom 15:14	1 Cor 4:14–20	Col 1:28
2 Tim 3:16–17	Rom 8:29	2 Cor 3:18	2 Tim 3:16–17
2 Pet 1:3–4	Ps 19	Ps 119	Acts 20:30–31
1 Cor 3:10–15			

Biblical counseling and discipleship can best be grasped by looking both at what it's not and then what it is.

1. Biblical counseling and discipleship is not

    a) just for "experts."

    b) optional for a believer.

    c) a separate ministry from the normal body life of the church. Thus, it's not autonomous from the church.

    d) just a generic system with Scripture sprinkled over it.

2. Conversely, biblical counseling and discipleship

    a) is each believer's responsibility (Acts 20:31; Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 4:14–20; Col 1:28).

    b) is the practical guidance that comes from a sound and thorough systematic theology.

        i) At core is our understanding of the nature of the Bible itself. What does the Bible say concerning itself? It is authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient (Ps 19; 119; 2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:3–4).

        ii) Each believer has been given the resource in the Word of God so that he can be equipped for this work.

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c) helps others discern and change desires, thinking, and behavior that don't conform to Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18). It warns others of false teaching and error (Acts 20:30–31).

d) is an actual discipline and pattern of maturity that is defined in the Bible.

Biblical counseling and discipleship come as an extension and application of other key areas of study and knowledge. To better grasp the importance and position of discipleship and counseling in relation to these "sister disciplines," we need to see what these other areas of study are and why they serve as a foundation to discipleship and counseling. There are "core pillars" that form the necessary foundation for a truly biblical theology:

1. Level One—Identify the canonical Scriptures (higher criticism vs. textual criticism). The Old Testament and New Testament authors were prophetic, confirmed by God, spoke truth about God, displayed the power of God, were accepted by people as speaking on behalf of God, and spoke with authority from God.

2. Level Two—Understand the canonical Scripture by employing a consistent interpretive process. There is a set of controlled principles by which we understand the intention of the author. There are cultural, geographical, historical, and linguistic factors to contend with in interpretation.

3. Level Three—Develop propositional doctrinal statements.

4. Level Four—Combine and organize the propositions topically to reflect a systematic theology.

5. Level Five—A truly biblical, practical theology is developed from systematic theology.

a) The doctrines are here applied to specific situations.

b) Implications confront our inner life: we confront the inner life from the exhortations to the mind, then we confront our behavior.

Discipleship and biblical counseling fall within the discipline of practical theology. Any "counsel" that does not proceed from a solid foundation of levels 1–4 won't be the mind of God on the issue at hand. Thus, it won't be authoritative, it won't provide more than a temporary fix, and it will deceive people into thinking they're getting biblical counsel. Moreover, this is a specific application of Paul's warning to the Corinthian church to beware how they build (1 Cor 3:10–15).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 8: BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Study 2: An Apologetic for Biblical Soul Care

True soul care must take its cue from the only authoritative source on the soul, namely the Scriptures. This lesson is an apologetic for the sufficiency of the Scriptures in soul care. Second, it is also a polemic against plausible-sounding solutions that are offered as alternatives to the biblical explanation.

The principles found within this section on counseling and discipleship are a compilation of materials—some developed by Grace Immanuel Bible Church, Jupiter, FL, as well as many adaptations from the counseling materials of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, under the leadership of Dr. John MacArthur. We are deeply indebted to Dr. MacArthur and the pastoral team at Grace Community for their labors and biblical clarity through the years on this vital subject.

Bible passages for study:

Gen 1:26–3:13	Ps 8:1, 3; 19; 119	Prov 10:28; 13:12	Eccl 2:10–11; 12:13
Matt 6:32–33	Matt 10:16–28	2 Pet 1:3	Luke 10:27; 12:19–20
Luke 16:13–14	Luke 22:24–27	John 1:9; 12:42–43	Luke 8:14–15; 9:23–24
Rom 1:18–32	Gal 5:16–17	1 Thess 4:4–5	Rom 4:20-21; 10:17
2 Tim 3:17	Jas 1:14	John 14:8	

An Apologetic for Biblical Soul Care

The Genesis account of the Fall gives us the only depiction of man in a pre-fallen state as well as right at the Fall. As such, it not only portrays to us the events that took place, but exposes the ultimate issues that have indelibly marked humanity.

"Who has the authority to describe the soul's dimensions? Who can describe what's wrong with the soul and then give solutions for the care of the soul? You either deny the historicity of the Fall as recorded in Genesis, or acknowledge that the Word of God both spells out the soul's need and points us to our remedy."

1. Before the Fall, God's creation was perfect and man was in a state of sinless perfection (Gen 1:31–2:25).

    a) "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen 1:31).

    b) "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25). This foreshadows what will soon be the polar opposite in 3:7. There was no self-interest, no self-consciousness, no corruption, no shame. This was an untested state of holiness and perfection. No soul care was yet needed!

2. In the garden God established man with work to do within a simple parameter.

    a) The command to tend to the garden (Gen 2:15).

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b) The command to obey in the matter of the tree and its fruit (Gen 2:16–17).

"There was no special quality in the fruit; God had simply invested the tree with the moral test as a symbol of the human heart's commitment. God was communicating to Adam, 'I am commanding you and want you to know that I'm sufficient. I'm giving you one command, I want you trust Me that I'm enough. When I give a command, I know what's best. When I give a command, I know the dangers if you violate it. I don't need to explain it any further than that. I give you a command to give you parameters so that you will say in your heart, "You are all that I need!"'"

3. At the Fall Satan tempted and deceived Eve, and Adam transgressed when he also ate the fruit.

a) Satan's fall occurred somewhere between Genesis 1:31 and the beginning of chapter 3. There was a fall of the angelic world, led by Satan himself.

b) Man's fall occurred in Genesis 3:1–6. Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent. The immediate consequence came in verse 7.

4. Immediately following Adam's transgression, they had fallen from purity and innocence to wholesale corruption. This was no gradual deterioration, but depravity is evident from the very outset following their disobedience (Gen 3:7–13).

a) Guilty: the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked.

b) Self-atoning: they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

c) Avoiding accountability: they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD.

d) Fearful: "I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself" (Gen 3:10).

e) Self-preserving and blameshifting: "the woman … gave me from the tree" (Gen 3:12).

f) Defiant: "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree" (Gen 3:12). Adam accuses God of wickedness. This is the height of man's arrogance!

g) Resisting confession: God didn't ask Adam questions because He was ignorant; He wanted Adam to confess his transgression and gave him an opportunity to do so.

"So now we know what's wrong with the soul: it is corrupt, it is self-conscious, it is impure, it is self-worshipping, self-pleasuring, hedonistic, it is self-atoning, it is self-preserving, self-protecting, it is guilty, it is afraid, and it is dishonest and unrepentant."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 8: BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Study 2: An Apologetic for Biblical Soul Care

A Polemic Against Plausible-Sounding Alternatives

Other claims to care for the soul offer competing explanations as to the first causes for the maladies we experience. As such, they must be discerned and examined, as these competing explanations challenge and contradict the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. And because they don't address ultimate causes, they don't provide ultimate soul care.

1. Psychology, in its many forms:

– Depth psychology (Freud)

– Neo-Freudians (Adler)

– Behaviorism (Skinner)

– Rational-Emotive Theory (Ellis)

– Third Force (Rogers)

– Family Systems (Ackerman)

– Etc.

a) Regardless of the form, common to them all is a set of beliefs offering to explain

– man's nature and makeup.

– man's problems.

– who is responsible for his problems.

– how to treat his problems.

– what guilt is.

– how to resolve guilt.

– who is able to counsel.

b) The world's philosophies are a competing "religion" in opposition to God's Word. Their worldviews and presuppositions contradict Scripture.

i) Atheism vs. theism

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ii) Naturalism vs. holism

iii) Reductionism vs. constructionism

iv) Individualism vs. others-centeredness

v) Relativism/pragmatism vs. absolutism

vi) Hedonism vs. obedience

vii) Victimism vs. responsibility

viii) Gnosticism vs. God's revelation

2. The psychologized gospel

a) It has infiltrated the evangelical church.

b) It is a perversion of the gospel, teaching

i) that Jesus came to satisfy you, meet your need for love and self-esteem, give you a healthy lifestyle, and solve your emotional problems.

ii) a different view of the person.

(1) Sound doctrine teaches that man has an active-responsible heart.

(2) This system teaches that man is a passive-reactive victim.

iii) a different view of circumstances.

(1) Sound doctrine teaches that circumstances may be significant but are not determinative.

(2) This system teaches that circumstances are determinative. It emphasizes the significance of *When/Where/With Whom*, believing these fundamentally shape an individual's life patterns.

iv) a different view of the resources available to the Christian.

(1) Sound doctrine teaches that the blood of Christ was shed to cleanse you from guilt and condemnation.

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(2) This system teaches that the blood of Christ evidences your innate worth, value, and beauty—and as such, meets your need for love and self-esteem.

v) a different means and purpose for personal transformation.

(1) Sound doctrine teaches the pursuit of transformation through faith, repentance, mind renewal, obedience, and sanctification for the glory of God, who is worthy.

(2) This system teaches that one pursues transformation for greater personal satisfaction (as expressed through getting needs met, finding inner healing, finding people who accept you, and setting attainable goals to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth).

3. Integrationism

Many within the church assert that human observation/scientific research can be integrated with sacred Scripture to produce a more robust body of knowledge better suited to soul care.

a) Sources of knowledge

i) Revelation

(1) General revelation

(a) Creation (Ps 8:1, 3; 19:1–6; Rom 1:20)

(b) Conscience (John 1:9; Rom 1:19; 2:14–15)

(2) Special revelation (Ps 19:7–9; 119; Rom 10:17; 2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:3)

ii) Empiricism (discoveries from human behavioral studies)

iii) Rationalism (or theories derived from mere reason)

iv) Intuition

b) Problems with seeking to integrate these sources of knowledge for soul care

i) These sources of knowledge are not on equal footing.

(1) Human observation and sacred Scripture are not peers; one will always interpret the other.

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– By some human observation the earth appears to be billions of years old. This observation is then used to interpret the text of special revelation.

– Human observation has just been raised to a position of greater authority than what the Scripture explicitly states.

(2) Human observations are skewed through a fallen mind.

– Romans 1:18–32 teaches that humanity is committed to suppressing the truth of God.

– What is observable in creation is then re-interpreted to fit a narrative of our own making, defined by a moral commitment to autonomy.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 8: BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Session 3: Sanctification: Becoming Like Christ

This study deals with sanctification and how to recognize true vs. false repentance. It then addresses four critical components in the process of change. Third, it identifies obstinacy as a major roadblock to maturity. Last, it provides a brief explanation of three models of sanctification.

The principles found within this section on counseling and discipleship are a compilation of materials—some developed by Grace Immanuel Bible Church, Jupiter, FL, as well as many adaptations from the counseling materials of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, under the leadership of Dr. John MacArthur. We are deeply indebted to Dr. MacArthur and the pastoral team at Grace Community for their labors and biblical clarity through the years on this vital subject.

Bible passages for study:

Exod 22:1	Lev 4:22–24; 5:15	1 Sam 15:27	Job 42:6
Ps 1:1–2	Ps 32:8–9; 38:1–8	Ps 51	Prov 28:13
Isa 1:16–17	Jer 31:34	Matt 3:7–8	Matt 5:7, 24
Matt 6:12; 18:21–35	Mark 7:6–13	Luke 3:3, 8; 5:27–28	Luke 7:42–43
Luke 17:3–4; 19:1–10	Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:20	Luke 24:47	Rom 12:18
Rom 1:18; 3:19, 23	Rom 2:5–6; 4:3–8; 6:5–13	Rom 10:1–10; 8:28–29	Titus 1:15
Rom 13:14	Rom 14:1–5, 23	1 Cor 4:5–6; 10:13	1 Cor 11:30
Gal 2:20; 5:17	Eph 4:19–32	Col 1:28–29; 2:13–14	3 John 11
Col 2:20–23; 3:9–13	1 Thess 5:21–22	1 Tim 1:13, 19; 4:2, 7	Heb 3–4; 5:14
Heb 10:25, 36	Heb 12:1–17; 13:18	Jas 1:2–8, 14–15	Jas 3:13–18
Jas 4:1–10; 5:16	1 John 1:8–9; 3:4	2 Cor 2:5–10	2 Cor 7:1; 9–11

Sanctification is the working out of the believer's justification. However, the Christian easily forgets the priority Scripture places on this process and will substitute cheap alternatives for true biblical sanctification. There is a moral imperative upon the believer, and it has elements to it both initially upon conversion as well as progressively in his sanctification.

True Sanctification and Repentance

1. True sanctification can be explained both negatively (what it's not) and positively (what it is).

    a) Sanctification is not

        i) mere relief from trials. This is what the world seeks.

            (1) Psalm 1 warns against trafficking in worldly ideologies.

            (2) Colossians 2:20–23 describes cheap forgeries of true sanctification.

        ii) produced by passion and feeling.

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b) Sanctification is

i) the formation of Christ in you (Rom 8:28–29; Col 1:28–29).

ii) produced as we conform to the Scripture by faith:

(1) Battling the way God commands (Heb 12:3–4)

(2) Abandoning self (Rom 10:1–10; Gal 2:20; 5:16)

(3) Uniting faith with hearing (Heb 3–4)

(4) Understanding God's sovereign hand (1 Cor 10:13; Jas 1:2–8)

2. True sanctification engenders true repentance, but false repentance bears the following marks:

a) Mouthing confession but without true change (Heb 12:17)

b) No genuine hatred of sin (Ps 51:4)

c) Bitterness towards God (Heb 12:15)

d) A countenance/disposition that hasn't changed (Ps 32:4; 51:12)

Four Critical Components in the Process of Change

1. The first component in the process of true change is to recognize and acknowledge guilt.

a) The world's perspective: guilt is something you are victimized by.

i) Its explanation of guilt: environment, sickness, heredity, ill-treatment by others, etc.

ii) Its efforts to deal with guilt:

(1) More sin (Rom 1:18)

(2) Chemicals (to suppress/dull feelings and behaviors)

(3) Blameshift (It's their fault.)

(4) Self-esteem (I'm not as bad as they are.)

(5) Self-gratification (I deserve happiness.)

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b) The Bible's perspective: guilt is a fact of your legal liability to punishment.

i) Guilt is universal because sin is universal (Rom 3:19, 23).

ii) Sin is serious because God is a holy judge (Rom 1:18; 2:5–6).

iii) Even where the effects of guilt may be lessened, guilt remains and can have physiological effects (Ps 32:1–5; 38:1–8). Feelings of guilt should not be disregarded, for there is always an underlying reason for guilt feelings.

c) God has given us the faculty of conscience to help us identify the presence of guilt. Our inner man uses the information it possesses to evaluate our thinking and actions. Conscience involves what we know or believe rather than what we feel. Feelings are often a result of the operations of conscience but are not identical with them.

i) The importance of a clean conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom 14:23; 1 Tim 1:19; Heb 13:18)

ii) The reality of abused consciences

(1) Seared/calloused (Eph 4:19; 1 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:15)

(2) Untrained (Lev 4:22–24; 1 Tim 1:13; Heb 5:14)

(3) Overactive (Rom 14:1–5, 23)

(4) Biblically uninformed (1 Tim 1:5)

d) What about guilt in the believer vs. the unbeliever?

i) The unbeliever stands liable before God for all his guilt.

ii) The believer

(1) Guilt for sin doesn't judge him in eternity, but he will come under the loving yet chastening hand of God.

(2) Chastening can be mild, a set of restrictions placed upon you in His providence, or it can be a scourging. Some were chastened so severely that they were taken home to heaven (1 Cor 11:30).

2. The second component in the process of true change is repentance. To repent means to turn/to change.

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a) The timing of repentance

i) Initially—repentance is necessary for genuine conversion (Luke 3:3; 2 Cor 7:10). Unsaved people must turn from sin; sin is self-rule/autonomy (Rom 10:9; 1 John 3:4).

ii) Progressively—repentance remains continually necessary for the believer (Ps 51; Luke 17:3–4). Believers must turn from sins (expressions of the lingering desires of the flesh [Gal 5:16–17]).

iii) Counterfeit repentance—there is a false repentance that does not bring about forgiveness (Matt 3:7–10; 7:21–23), but rather produces death (2 Cor 7:10b).

b) The task of repentance

i) Comprehending—we must see our sin as it relates to God before we can repent. A change of mind is required.

ii) Confessing—to confess means "to say the same thing" (*homologéo*). We must acknowledge to God the fact of our sin and agree with God about the nature of our sin (Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:8–9).

iii) Choosing—true repentance always includes a willful resolve to not repeat the sin (Isa 1:16–17; Luke 5:27–28).

c) Signs of true repentance

i) Restitution—"to set things right"—the repentant sinner must fulfill any obligations to the offended party (Exod 22:1; Lev 5:15; Luke 19:1–10). This includes both an outward confession when it is appropriate (Jas 5:16) and a willingness to accept the consequences of our sin (Ps 51:3–4).

ii) Reconciliation—true repentance will cause us to do whatever we can to transform the conflict into a peaceful and edifying friendship (Matt 5:24; Rom 12:18; 2 Cor 2:7–8).

iii) Regret—True repentance may not always be accompanied by emotions (especially those that are visible to others), but in many cases a feeling of sorrow corroborates other evidences and points to a real change in thinking (Ps 51; Job 42:6). Emotional responses alone, however, do not prove that repentance is genuine (1 Sam 15:27; 2 Cor 7:10b).

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Note: We must remember that not every case of repentance requires all of the above changes, and we also must be very careful to allow the fruits of repentance to be defined by God rather than by man (Mark 7:6–13; 1 Cor 4:5–6).

3. The third component in the process of true change is forgiveness. To forgive means to pardon (Jer 31:34).

a) Forgiveness means "to release from liability to suffer punishment or penalty."

i) *Aphíēmi*—to let go or release; often refers to debts having been cancelled or paid (Matt 6:12; 18:27, 32).

ii) *Charízomai*—to bestow favor unconditionally; this is undeserved, it cannot be earned (Luke 7:43; 2 Cor 2:7–10; Col 3:13).

iii) Forgiveness according to Matthew 18:21–35

When forgiving others, there are two aspects to keep in mind:

(1) The positional aspect

– Mercy absorbs full payment (Matt 18:27).

– Those who have received mercy should likewise give it (Matt 18:33; cf. 5:7).

(2) The relational aspect

– Mending broken communion

– Ministering God's peace

iv) Forgiveness should be carried out:

(1) Immediately (Luke 17:3)

(2) Repeatedly (Luke 17:4)

(3) Lavishly (2 Cor 2:5–8)

b) Forgiveness displayed

i) By God

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(1) Man needs God's forgiveness both before he is saved (Rom 4:3–8; Col 2:13–14) and after he is saved (Matt 6:12; Heb 12:5-11).

(2) The former is positional forgiveness while the latter is relational forgiveness.

(ii) By man

(1) We must forgive one another just as God has forgiven us (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).

(2) This means you will not:

– remind the person of the sin (unless it would be absolutely necessary to do so for the person's good).

– mention it to anyone else (unless it would be absolutely necessary).

– allow your mind to dwell on it.

We are commanded to forgive, so we are sinning if we refuse to make that promise. Therefore forgiveness is a matter of obedience rather than feeling.

4. The fourth component in the process of true change is replacement.

a) The concept of replacement

i) Biblical change involves both "putting off "and "putting on."

ii) In order for change to be pleasing to God and to last over time, old sinful patterns must be replaced with new godly ones.

iii) Replacement is taught throughout the Scripture (e.g., Ps 1:1–2; Isa 1:16–17; Rom 13:14; Eph 4:22–32; Col 3:9–10; 1 Thess 5:21–22; Heb 10:25; 3 John 11).

b) The character of replacement

i) Breaking and establishing habits (Rom 6:5–13 [esp. vv. 12–13]; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10)

ii) Enduring in obedience (Heb 10:36; 12:1–3)

iii) Structuring our environment (Rom 13:14; 1 Tim 4:7)

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 8: BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Session 3: Sanctification: Becoming Like Christ

Making Progress: Fear of the Lord vs. Obstinacy

In the process of helping people change and mature, there is often a roadblock that retards progress. The core issue is competing affections (i.e., idols of the heart). This is due to a lack of the fear of God and a desire for something other than God.

1. He must understand that the only way for a Christian to cooperate with God is to have a proper fear of God in his life.

a) Psalm 32:8 portrays the man who fears God: "I [God] will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you."

b) 2 Corinthians 7:1—"Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

2. He must understand that there are only two expressions of a life: one marked by obstinacy and one marked by the fear of God. Each is recognizable and discerned by its attendant fruits (Jas 3:13–18).

a) A heart ruled by the fear of God is marked by patterns of:

i) Spiritual discernment ("wise and understanding")

ii) Gentleness/meekness

iii) Purity, peaceableness, gentleness, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and sincere

iv) Being accompanied by a harvest of righteousness

b) A heart ruled by sinful desire is marked by patterns of:

i) Bitter jealousy

ii) Selfish ambition

iii) Boasting

iv) Hypocrisy

v) Being accompanied by disorder and vile practice

3. He must understand that there is only one explanation for man's obstinacy, and there is only one solution.

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a) The root of obstinacy

i) It is not due to circumstance, parents, health, environment, upbringing, etc.

ii) It is due to your own appetites (Jas 1:14–15; 4:1–2). If the fruit of your life matches the description of the earthly wisdom list, then your desire is controlling you. This is enmity with God (Jas 4:4).

b) The solution to obstinacy (and getting out of bondage to your desires)

i) Stop legitimizing sinful desires (Jas 4:3).

ii) Stop believing Satan's lie that even temporary satisfaction will be worth it. There can be no flippancy about sinful desires; there must be an intensity and focus in the pursuit of the fear of God (Jas 4:7–10).

iii) Yield to the truth of God's Word in humility.

(1) This is the only effective mechanism against sin's enticement.

(2) Yielding in humility results in resisting Satan's schemes (Jas 4:6–7).

4. He must understand that God disciplines those whom He loves.

a) God disciplines His children that they might share His holiness (Heb 12:10).

b) Some discipline is for training while other discipline is a corrective in response to waywardness.

c) The discipline may be mild or severe (1 Cor 11:30).

d) How does one avoid unnecessary chastening? "Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check" (Ps 32:9).

Three Models of Sanctification

There are various views on how one becomes Christlike and to what degree Christlikeness is attainable in this life. It is important to understand these views in order to be equipped to truly care for and disciple others who may have different conceptions as to how maturity is attained. There are three basic models of sanctification:

1. The Wesleyan View (Christian Perfection): a "second work of grace" catapults the believer into a state of sinlessness, often called "entire sanctification."

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2. The Keswick View (Higher Life or Deeper Life): a unique post-salvation commitment (or enlightenment) allows the believer to enter into a victorious and consistent life of obedience. Spiritual growth takes place primarily by a passive trust in the work of God (i.e., "let go and let God").

3. The Biblical View of Progressive Sanctification (commonly referred to as the Reformed View): a lifelong cycle of sin, repentance, renewal, and growth toward Christlikeness that will be complete only when we meet our Lord (Rom 6–8). This involves active discipline of the believer, who trusts that the Holy Spirit is energizing his effort (Phil 2:12–13). This view is well-articulated by the Westminster Confession, Chapter XIII:

> (1) They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
>
> (2) This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life: there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.
>
> (3) In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.[1]

[1] Chapter 13 of the Westminster Confession, accessed on www.reformed.org.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 8: BIBLICAL COUNSELING AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP
Study 4: Becoming a Mature Disciple-Maker

This study provides practical principles to live by in order to become an effective disciple-maker and counselor. Discipleship and counseling is a skill that can and must improve as each believer grows in sanctification. No one is intrinsically a gifted disciple-maker; rather everyone must labor, strive, and apply concerted effort to grow in this much-needed skill. Fundamental to this process is that the disciple-maker is himself subjecting his own life and heart to the Scriptures so he has experiential wisdom in the application of the Scriptures from his own life. What follows are practical principles to help you may grow as a disciple-maker.

The principles found within this section on counseling and discipleship are a compilation of materials—some developed by Grace Immanuel Bible Church, Jupiter, FL, as well as many adaptations from the counseling materials of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, under the leadership of Dr. John MacArthur. We are deeply indebted to Dr. MacArthur and the pastoral team at Grace Community for their labors and biblical clarity through the years on this vital subject.

Bible passages for study:

Prov 18:13 Luke 6:45 2 Cor 5:11–20 2 Tim 2:14–15
Titus 2:7-8, 15

1. Diligently apply yourself to making disciples.

    a) Stay in prayer for whomever you are helping.

    b) Keep involved with a person to whatever degree you are able, even if their problem is too difficult for you. You can learn from someone else by observing them.

    c) The only way to grow and increase your skill is to work at it. This holds true in every domain of life.

    d) You don't want to be in the same place five years from now as you are today.

2. Diligently apply yourself to righty handling the Scriptures.

    a) Be zealous to be approved in your handle on God's Word, with no need to be ashamed (2 Tim 2:15).

    b) Practically you must know your way around the Bible.

        i) Have tools to access the Scriptures (e.g., a concordance) but don't rely exclusively on them.

        ii) Memorize texts.

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iii) Know key passages that clearly address heart issues. (Find the passages that are most useful and penetrating to your heart, and work through them.)

iv) Disciple your own heart and mind.

v) Disciple those in your own home.

3. Diligently practice and hone the skill of listening.

a) Premise: People's words reveal much about who they are and how they think: man's "mouth speaks from that which fills his heart" (Luke 6:45).

b) Practice: You must listen carefully and then categorize and examine what they say: "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov 18:13).

i) Listen to people.

(1) Identify the problem/difficulty. (Have they identified it?)

(2) Identify why it's a problem. (Have they identified why?)

(3) Look for any solutions others have told them to pursue. (Have they attempted those solutions [whether successful or not]?) This will reveal much about how they think.

– Jot down notes to help organize the information they give you.

– Don't miss important clues that reveal their heart/mind.

– Your goal is to systematize what they think and why; this will help you prioritize and focus on the most important issues.

– Major on the majors; don't nit-pick secondary or minor things.

– Be patient; find out what they mean by what they say.

ii) Shepherd them, don't just share information with them. Don't jump on every issue, but rather understand that God is the one sanctifying them and deal with the primary issue at hand. This requires patience and humility.

4. Diligently speak (and live) with boldness as an ambassador of Christ.

a) Speak as one who is filled with the fear of God; don't be constrained by the fear of man.

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i) Seeking the Lord's glory is what must propel you to speak (2 Cor 5:11).

ii) God is making His appeal through you, so speak fearlessly (2 Cor 5:20). Churches fail to do church discipline out of an absence of the fear of God and a presence of the fear of man.

b) Speak in such a way that no one can disregard you (Titus 2:15).

"Let no one disregard you'—what he means is, speak with such authority, power, and persuasive pleading that for your part you're not letting them disregard the truth. You've confronted them at every level they can be confronted. You've pointed out every way that their current path is destructive. You've pointed out every way that Christ can change their life, could restore their heart, can bless them and encourage them. You have exhausted your persuasive instrumentation."

c) Live a life that cannot be condemned and one which appeals to people's conscience.

i) Be marked by good works and speech that are known to God and known to people's conscience (2 Cor 5:11).

ii) Be a model of good works and sound speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 2:7–8).

5. Diligently guard your mind to keep the focus on Christ primary. While Christian virtue is important, uphold the character of Christ by connecting all their problems to a wrong view of Christ.

6. Diligently take the person's problems back to the gospel. Examine what their problem looks like in light of the gospel.

"If your discipling of someone does not traverse the cross, the grace of the cross, the person of Christ regularly, you're not helping. If you're dabbling in little self-help ditties on the surface, you're not helping. Practical changes in someone's life are the last change that should happen. Inner life change is the first. Anyone can feel euphoria by 'rearranging the furniture.' All you did was rearrange the furniture and clean out the closet. That doesn't help, especially when the plumbing is leaking into the walls and the structure is unsound."

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 9: EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY
Study 1: Abiding and Pruning Result in the Fruit of the Spirit

The purpose of this session is to lay a foundational understanding of how fruit is the purpose of God for the Christian's life. The process that God orchestrates is "abiding and pruning," which every believer must embrace. No one in Christ can be stagnated. God will prune us because He elected us, called us, saved us, and He loves us.

Bible passages for study:

John 15:1–17	Heb 12	2 Cor 12:7	John 1:18
Acts 27:31	1 Cor 7:11, 40	Heb 7:3	John 12:46
John 14:10	Col 3:16	2 Cor 4:7–16	Rom 5:3–5
Gal 5:19–22			

Consider the guarantee in Hebrews 12 that legitimate children of God will be chastened. God disciplines us to share in His holiness. The goal of all discipline is to product fruit. In Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the Spirit is referred to as a package. Paul speaks of the "fruit" of the Spirit and not the "fruits." Unlike the gifts of the Spirit, which are variously distributed, the fruit of the Spirit comes as a complete package. The package of fruit of the Spirit is the process of conforming of our lives to Christ in the inner and outer man.

In John 15:1–17 Jesus Christ teaches about the abiding and pruning process. The overarching fruit being produced through the pruning and disciplining process is love (v. 10)—love for God and love for others. The highest altitude here is love and Christ ends with a command in verse 17 to love one another. If you love Christ, you will walk in His commandments and the outflow of your love for Christ will be love for one another.

Using the metaphor of the vine and the branches, Christ is focused on the fruit that He is producing through us. In this passage, we see the contrast between unbelievers and believers in reference to their fruit bearing.

Unbelievers Are Destined for Fire

The bulk of John 15:1–17 focuses on the abiding and pruning of believers. However, there is a stark warning for unbelievers, who are also referred to as branches in the metaphor. These are those who associate themselves with Christ, but have no spiritual fruit whatsoever (Gal 5:22–23). These branches are gathered and burned.

1. The vinedresser (God) takes away branches that do not bear fruit (v. 2).

2. Unbelievers are gathered and thrown into the fire (v. 6).

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3. God has no use for someone who has attached himself to Christ, but does not bear any Christian fruit.

Believers Are Pruned to Bear Fruit

1. Christ uses the rest of the vine-and-branch metaphor to illustrate pruning in the lives of genuine Christians (vv. 1–17).

a) Every branch that bears fruit is pruned so that it will bear more fruit. (To bear fruit is to manifest the growing work of God in your life.)

b) The process includes God taking away areas of your life that do not bear fruit.

c) He prunes away the excess baggage and trims the junk (cf. Heb 12:1–2).

d) This work by God then channels the spiritual nutrients to the most needed areas in your life.

2. The Bible defines the fruit; we don't get to define the fruit which Christ produces (v. 2)

a) We cannot compare our lives with someone else and think we are fruitful. The standard is always Christ. *Do I look like Christ? Is my fruit Christlike?*

b) We lay ourselves open next to Scripture and see if there is biblical fruit.

3. Fruit bearing is not stagnated; it is an ongoing process (v. 2).

a) We are always in the process of bearing fruit as genuine Christians.

b) We cannot hope for a stagnant Christian life for comfort's sake.

c) Hebrews 12:3–13 bears out that every legitimate son is disciplined, so it is disastrous to desire a stagnant Christian life. You are someone whom He received, so you are scourged.

d) God's love drives the pruning. Apart from it we will:

i) underestimate our need for the pruning.

ii) overestimate the fruit we presently bear.

4. We cannot bear fruit at the highest level without embracing more trials (v. 2).

a) We need to be weaned off the things that we see and the things we still cannot see.

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b) God brings us to the point of desperation to turn us from autonomy and self-worship.

c) Paul was a giant in the faith, but he was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him from exalting himself (2 Cor 12:7).

d) Paul interprets the suffering as a pruning process, and he embraces it.

e) We must embrace the pruning process: we also will have "thorn-in-the-flesh" processes in our jobs, our health, our relationships, and our families.

i) How often do we embrace the hemming-in process like Paul and say, *"I am being pruned and I joyfully embrace this so that I will not exalt myself"*?

ii) So often, wanting the trial to end, we try to slap God's hand away.

iii) But the vinedresser knows exactly what we need!

5. We are already clean (*katharós*) because of the word Christ spoke (v. 3).

a) Fruit cannot be produced apart from the saturation in truth.

b) Sanctification and pruning is produced by the Word of God.

6. The word for abiding (*méno*) is used ten times in the passage; it is an important concept (vv. 4–7, 9–10).

a) It is a synonym for "stay"/"remain" in Christ's love. Live, dwell, continue, remain comfortably as your home, happily in Christ's love (cf. John 12:24, 46; 15:4; Acts 27:31; 1 Cor 7:11, 40; Heb 7:3).

b) In the context of the vine and the branches, to abide means to remain in the intimacy of Christ.

c) We must repent of self-trust and entrust ourselves to Him. That is what it means to die to self and abide in Him.

d) We abide in Christ's love through a yielded submissiveness to His commandments (vv. 9–10).

e) Abiding in Christ produces more fruit—and proof that you belong to God (John 15:8).

7. When we see fruit, we must rejoice in God's work!

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a) It is all of the Spirit ministering to me and through me.

b) When we get victory, we often don't rejoice that it is a supernatural work. We are mistaken when we take credit for the victories.

c) The smallest area of righteousness can be produced only by the Spirit of God.

8. God is exceedingly patient when there is little fruit produced. If you doubt fruit:

a) Go to the Savior and pray for more fruit!

b) Ask for more evidence in repentance.

c) Pray for more love and obedience.

Bearing Fruit Produces Joy

1. John 15:11, then, is an amazing promise from our Lord: Christ's joy can be ours and our joy is made full.

a) It is joyful when we abide and become conformed to Christ. God then pours fruitfulness into your life.

b) A fullness of joy rises from

i) a clear conscience.

ii) a mind renewed in the things of God.

iii) a right understanding of truth.

iv) the power to believe God.

v) growing power over sin.

vi) the power to walk in righteousness.

c) It is the same joy that Jesus had when He obeyed His Father to the last command.

d) It comes when you conform to Christ and submit your will.

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e) God pours into your heart and mind a freedom, a rest, a steadiness, an unburdened conscience, wisdom, usefulness, fruitfulness, the ability to speak a word of counsel in a moment, etc.

2. Every believer should be experiencing increasing joy due to humble submission to His commands. Not experiencing joy?

a) If you are new in the Lord, more pruning is necessary, but even new believers should be experiencing some joy.

b) You may be infantile in your submission to God's commands.

c) Are you holding onto a habit, pattern, or sin that you are not willing to give up?

d) Do you have an idolatry that you refuse to confess and forsake?

e) Genuine Christians will always be brought to a wall—perhaps a public scandal, the loss of something precious, or a long-term thorn in the flesh—when they are stubborn like a mule.

f) Many of us have spiritual scars from the pruning, and we warn our brothers. But now, we have joy after coming through the pruning.

g) Christ's command to abide in His love is not a grind.

i) Do you want Jesus' joy full in your heart? Love Him!

ii) How do you manifest love for Him? Submit to His Word! Yield your donkey-like, stubborn will.

iii) How do you yield your will? Believe God!

3. Jesus wants to fill us with His joy, but this joy is not on my terms.

a) Joy on Christ's terms is connected exclusively with righteousness. It is not an emotional joy.

b) And then, supernaturally your life is infused with the joy of Christ for righteous things.

c) Some of us have joyless seasons for too long because we compartmentalize our lives and won't give up something we covet.

d) We measure our joy based on our obedience:

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i) Do I have humility before the words of Christ?

ii) Am I giving Him my most difficult areas to cultivate the greatest humility?

iii) Have I identified the areas that I compartmentalize?

4. Joy doesn't come without great difficulty and struggle.

a) Your fruit depends on it!

b) We must have our mind on Christ and not on the world (Col 3:1–4).

c) Our mind must be saturated and filled with truth (Col 3:16).

d) God will bring things into our lives to prevent greater sin.

e) God will wean us from the things we don't want to be weaned from or aren't even aware of yet.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 9: EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY
Study 2: The Fundamental Motives for Service in the Church

The purpose of this study is to develop a solid understanding of the fundamental motives that drive the believer toward service in the local church and how the Spirit of God works with each one of us, empowering us for service.

Bible passages for study:

Ps 96	1 Pet 4:7–9	1 Pet 1:13, 22–24	1 Pet 4:5, 12–13
1 Pet 5:4	Ps 90	2 Pet 3:8	1 Pet 1:1, 5–7
1 Pet 2:11–12, 18–20	1 Pet 3:16	Col 3:1	Acts 1:7
Matt 24:36	1 John 2:18	Heb 9:26	Rom 13:12
Jas 5:8	Rev 1:3	Rev 22:20	1 Tim 4:7
John 7:38	Eph 5:18	Rom 1:16	

God is faithful in His work to renew minds for the purpose of growing His people to be more mature and Christlike. It is critical that we are encouraged by the work that He does in us and in other believers. He produces "fruit that remains" (John 15:16).

Psalm 96 reminds us that we should tell of the works of the Lord constantly. We should tell them to one another, speak them back to the Lord in thankfulness, and remind ourselves by speaking to our own souls about the way the Lord has worked. This gratitude carries you into the more difficult seasons when the Lord ordains that you serve in ways you haven't yet served.

Even if you are not called to one of the more formal ministries in the church, there is a personal ministry that the Lord calls each one of us to. There are no spectators in the body of Christ.

Fundamental Motive #1—"The End of All Things Is Near" (1 Pet 4:7a)

In 1 Peter 4, Peter is writing at the end of the apostolic era. He knows that the apostles will go off the scene soon. The church will be in the hands of those on whom the Spirit of God has put the mantle.

He saved them, put them into local bodies of believers, and told them to take the gospel to the remotest parts of the earth. To do so, believers would have to be equipped to serve. And Peter tells us the highest motives for Christian service.

Some of the motives could have been:

– to have great fellowship;

– to have a strong church;

– to have gospel witness;

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– to be useful to the Lord;

– to bear fruit in your personal ministry.

But none of these are the highest motive. The highest and most powerful motive is that *"the end of all things is near"* (1 Pet 4:7a).

1. Jesus Christ is returning quickly. We are closer now to His return than any other time in history. Everything is moving toward Christ's kingdom, the eternal state, and God's glory.

a) This motive should drive everything in your life: your family, your work, and all your ministry.

i) This is where we derive our passion.

ii) This is where we source our energy.

iii) This is the reference point that doesn't move.

b) Why are we goofing around with frivolity when Christ's return is near?

2. The end of all things means that Christ is establishing His kingdom. It is the *télos* word group related to the ultimate completion.

a) It implies that something ends, but not merely chronologically; something reaches its planned culmination.

b) Peter is saying this because he wants us to live for that time. He is giving us the sense of nearness all through the letter. For example:

– "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5)

– "praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Christ (1 Pet 1:7)

– "grace to be brought to you" (1 Pet 1:13)

– "Him who is ready to judge" (1 Pet 4:5)

– "at the revelation of His glory" (1 Pet 4:13)

– "glory that is to be revealed" (1 Pet 5:1)

– "when the Chief Shepherd appears (1 Pet 5:4)

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3. God knew how long He would take from man's perspective.

a) To the Lord, 1,000 years is as a day, and a day is as 1,000 years (2 Pet 3:8).

b) Man's earthly life is fleeting (Ps 90).

c) Peter is giving us spiritual altitude. We must redeem the time.

d) The Lord knew we would be small-minded and small-hearted, forgetting that the Lord is coming back. Without this motivation, we would waste time and not produce fruit as we wait for Jesus to return.

4. The nearness of the end means that we should live with an expectancy that judgment is coming.

a) The sense of expectation is all over the apostolic writings:

i) The Father has fixed the time (Matt 24:36; Acts 1:7).

ii) "It is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).

iii) Christ put away sin "at the consummation of the ages"—that was the beginning of the end (Heb 9:26).

iv) The day/coming of the Lord is at hand (Rom 13:12; Jas 5:8).

v) "The time is near" (Rev 1:3).

vi) The Lord is coming quickly (Rev 22:20).

vii) "The day [is] drawing near" (Heb 10:25).

b) Practically, this means we should:

i) Have open spiritual eyes, so when the Spirit of God puts someone in our path, we are ready to share the truth.

ii) Live holy, circumspect lives.

iii) Have a broader vision to see what God wants us to do to further His kingdom purposes.

c) In the very next breath, Peter tightens up the way we think about this: "Therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer" (1 Pet 4:7b). We could put this in three categories:

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i) Clarity ("sound judgment")—You should be clear-headed about the right things.

(1) This means you think critically about spiritual realities, and pass this wisdom to the younger generation.

(2) This means you are clear in your articulation of truth, and you don't let error slip by unexamined.

ii) Discipline ("sober spirit")—You should be self-controlled and watchful, alert and ready (cf. 1 Tim 4:7b).

iii) Humility/Dependence ("for the purpose of prayer")—We pray more effectively and appropriately when we are alert. You will be much more dependent if you are thinking about spiritual matters rightly.

Fundamental Motive #2—Fervent Love for One Another (1 Pet 4:8a)

1. The most important outworking of love is to reduce the ripple effect of sin (1 Pet 4:8b).

a) Love covers all kinds of messiness. (Fervent love puts a cloak over sin.)

b) This kind of love

i) is without hypocrisy (1 Pet 1:22).

ii) is rooted in truth (1 Pet 1:22–23).

iii) makes you useful in the church.

iv) may not be reciprocated.

(1) But we are not driven by receiving love.

(2) Love at its zenith happens when you do not get a reciprocal response (cf. Rom 5:8).

2. Love for one another is sacrificial, even extending to brethren we don't know (1 Pet 4:9).

a) This hospitality word group (*philózenos*) is directed at the brethren, primarily.

b) It is an affectionate concern for people, especially strangers.

c) The hospitality commands are directed at the body.

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d) The depth of our love accelerates without any complaint.

i) Differences are set aside.

ii) Preferences are set aside.

iii) You may find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings with believers, but they will be your close comrades because of your common faith.

iv) The body becomes more useful to the Lord.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 9: EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY
Study 3: A Call to Faithfulness in Serving

The purpose of this study is to develop a solid understanding of the fundamentals of service in the local church, the motives for serving, and how the Spirit of God works with each one of us, empowering us for service.

Bible passages for study:

1 Pet 4:10–11 Eph 4:16 Eph 4:3–6

God calls us to employ our gift. No one is left out. There are broad categories of gifting, and more specific gifts are identified, but clearly the Spirit of God is at work in a believer's life, so we are to use our gifts for the betterment of the church. Like other commands in God's Word, we must use our gifts and not be idle. Using our gifts in the church is the most loving thing we can do.

Employ Your Gift in Serving One Another

In 1 Peter 4:10–11 the apostle Peter tells us that each person is given a "special gift" (*chárisma*), and we are commanded to employ it in serving one another in the body.

1. "Each one has received a special gift … [to] employ" (v. 10).

a) Their hindrances

i) They may be "shelved" because you have sin in your life.

(1) Pride

– The worthiness of Christ produces humility.

– A humble response to the worthiness of Christ is accepting service as an undeserved privilege.

– We are unworthy slaves and doing only what we ought to do (Luke 17:10).

– I serve because Christ loves me. I am undeserving of His love.

(2) Simple neglect

(3) Pettiness—small views of church life

(4) Unresolved sin among members in the body of Christ: we must be willing to forgive. We are called to pardon lavishly.

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(5) Neglect of prayer dependence

(6) Absence of thankfulness and gratitude

(7) Acting like buckets of grace, instead of funnels to shower others with grace.

(8) Lack of love

(9) Not serving with joy

ii) They may be "shelved" because you don't know what the Scripture teaches about them.

(1) You may not have been useful because you thought you didn't have a grace gift.

(2) Some may have ignored what God has clearly said in this text in self-pity as though God couldn't use you in a tangible way.

iii) They may be "shelved" because the church practices a superficial application of what 1 Peter 4:7–11 teaches:

(1) Beginning with sound judgment and sober spirt, we are led to alert prayer (v. 7), then love (v. 8), which overflows in service (vv. 9–10).

(2) But if you try to work that backwards, you can see how it devastates the body of Christ:

– Love becomes dull.

– Prayer becomes weak.

– Discernment becomes absent.

– Then there is no thought of Christ's coming to reign.

iv) They may be "shelved" because the church leadership is unwilling to model biblical service.

(1) Some leaders are after money and they are bitter that they are not being paid enough.

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(2) Some leaders spend their resources on worldly living, instead of using it in the ministry; they are consumers, not givers.

(3) Some leaders want power and control over people, thus crushing a culture of using our giftedness.

(4) Some leaders are fainthearted or timid in their faith.

(5) Some leaders are risk adverse and try to micromanage everything in the body.

– But the body belongs to the Lord.

– He does with it what He wants.

(6) Unresolved conflict in leadership and lay ministers

(7) Church splits or factions

"In some seasons vitality dips and God then causes a desperation in the people for growth."

b) Their use

i) There is great comradery knowing that each one has been gifted.

ii) The proper working of each individual part contributes to the building up of the body in love and the usefulness for gospel ministry (Eph 4:16).

iii) There is unity and mutual hope in the Spirit (Eph 4:3–6).

2. We should serve one another "as good stewards" (v. 10).

a) Our stewardship means we will give an account to the Lord for how we used the gifts He gave us.

b) If we were poor stewards in the past, get after it, and serve and use your gift!

c) Sometimes trials in your life prevent more usefulness, but God wants to grow you through those trials to make you more useful.

d) You are hindered by things you cannot figure out, but God wants to give you wisdom and insight to walk through them and be more useful to the body.

i) That's because it is a stewardship/accountability.

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ii) God doesn't give us an accountability without growing us so we can accomplish it.

3. We serve as good stewards of "the manifold grace of God" (v. 10).

a) Imbedded in this terminology is symmetry and creativity.

b) There is a multi-colored nature. There is variety.

c) God has uniquely put together the body so that we build up the body as we employ our gifts.

d) It should inspire us to be in the body what He wants us to be.

4. We serve "by the strength that God supplies" (v. 11).

a) People bless the body and one another as the Spirit energizes their service.

b) It energizes people to observe this.

c) There is a model of Christ on display, the body is served, and people are blessed.

5. We serve "so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever" (v. 11).

a) There is divine mastery over all the church's service.

b) God's sovereignty and majesty are on display in the deployment of people's gifts.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 9: EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY
Study 4: Biblical Categories of Gifts

The purpose of this study is to understand the broad and specific categories which Scripture uses to discuss the spiritual gifts. Furthermore, this study will differentiate between the gifts given to the New Testament apostles and prophets from the gifts given to the broader body of Christ.

Bible passages for study:

1 Pet 4:10–11 Eph 2:20 1 Cor 12:7–10 1 Cor 12:28–29

Grace enablements are identifiable in two general categories: the speaking gifts and the serving gifts (1 Pet 4:11).

General Categories of Gifts

1. Speaking gifts will be clearly identifiable. You can speak the utterances of God in a way that edifies people.

2. If you do not have speaking gifts, you must be in the category of serving.

3. Some have both gifting categories to some degree.

a) It's not necessarily important that you decide today which category you are in, and with which nuance.

i) Each one has a unique combination of gifts that are brought to the body in unique ways.

ii) As you mature in the Spirit of God, your gifting becomes evident as others see the fruit.

iii) If you cannot discern the fruit, just keep serving. In heaven, the Lord will open our eyes to all the fruit we could not see.

b) It is important that we obey 1 Peter 4:10!

i) "Employ it in serving one another"—we are called to give our life toward this task.

ii) Go to the body of Christ and the relationships God has given you, and in fervent love and humble sober-mindedness, serve their needs.

iii) Paul says in Romans 1:11, "I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you." He didn't know what gift he was going to give them.

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(1) What were the needs?

(2) It could have been to teach a series on something.

(3) It could have been to get rid of some false teachers.

(4) Did families and marriages need counseling?

(5) Perhaps he was needed behind the scenes to show off the character of Christ in love, prayer, and faithfulness.

c) You will not see the evidence of fruit if you do not supply what you are called to provide.

i) A holy life with humble obedience to God's commands

ii) The knowledge of and belief in God's Word—a renewed mind (Rom 12:1–2)

Lists of More Specifically-Identified Spiritual Gifts

1. In Romans 12:6–8 Paul identifies the sign gifts in the early church and some of the gifts that continue today.

a) Apostolic era only

– Prophecy (v. 6)

(1) Revelatory offices (apostles and prophets) revealed the heart and mind of God in the New Covenant.

(2) They were like the prophets of old, who were given the truth in their minds, and they spoke it exactly as God gave it to them.

(3) The prophets in the apostolic era of the church taught and wrote exactly what the Spirit of God revealed to them.

(4) The apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the New Covenant work of the church (Eph 2:20; cf. 1 Cor 12:28–29).

b) Throughout the church age

The categories of gifts are listed in general terms. The gifts are distributed by God in a multitude of unique ways and are often exercised in combination.

i) Service (v. 7)

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– This corresponds with 1 Peter 4:11.

ii) Teaching (v. 7)

– This word group (*didaskalía*) means to put it accurately into the mind with implications to convict your will.

iii) Exhortation (v. 8)

– This is an enablement by the Holy Spirit to exhort the will in such a way that people are moved by the truth.

iv) Giving (v. 8)

(1) The giver blesses and loves the church through the sacrificial nature of their giving.

(2) It is not necessarily through money.

(3) The blessing is in the modeling of giving as well as in the practical result of the giving.

v) Leadership (v. 8)

(1) Natural leadership qualities are different.

(2) This is the term (*proïstēmi*) for the ability to be out ahead of others.

(3) The Spirit of God gives the ability to organize and to show the way.

(4) The dynamic is to mobilize efforts for a particular task.

(5) These may not be visible, but when the Spirit grips them for the work of the ministry, the church benefits.

vi) Mercy (v. 8)

(1) We are all called to be merciful, but this Spirit-produced enablement goes beyond the level of most of us.

(2) Sometimes God puts the exhorter right next to the merciful in a bedside ministry, so the exhorter learns.

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(3) In other situations, mercy people who don't often rebuke are placed next to the exhorters in situations where we should be bold, and where there may be laziness or unbelief.

2. In 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 Paul identifies more of the sign/revelatory gifts, which did not continue after the apostolic era.

a) The list

i) Wisdom through the Spirit (v. 8)

ii) Knowledge according to the Spirit (v. 8)

iii) Faith by the Spirit (v. 9)

iv) Gifts of healing (v. 9)

v) Effecting of miracles (powers associated with casting out demons) (v. 10)

vi) The prophetic work (v. 10)

vii) The distinguishing of spirits (v. 10)

viii) The gift of tongues (i.e., languages) (v. 10)

ix) The revelatory gift of the interpretation of languages (v. 10)

b) The context

i) Paul explains the miraculous gifts here because they were important for the church in Corinth, since there were unbelieving Jews in the church.

ii) The sign gifts were important to attest to the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not for Jews only but also for gentiles.

iii) On the whole, Israel did not conceive of a Messiah for the gentile nations. It was shocking for the Jews that both Jew and gentile would have access to the Father.

iv) God accompanied the message with miraculous gifts in the early days of the church with a slow tapering off when Jew and gentile were brought together in the New Covenant as it was written down by the apostles.

v) Once the miracle of the Scriptures attesting to the New Covenant were in place, there was no more purpose for the Spirit of God to work such gifts in the church.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 9: EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY
Study 5: Maxing Out in Our Service for the Church

The purpose of this study is to develop a rich and practical appreciation of the apostle Paul's teaching in Romans 12 on the unique combination gifts that each individual believer is granted by grace. Each believer has a different measure of faith for a unique functioning in the church. It is most encouraging when we see someone maxing out his unique giftedness for the edification of the body and it goes on week, after month, after year, after decade, after multiple decades.

Bible passages for study:

Rom 12:1–8	Jas 1:5–6	Col 1:9–12	Eph 5:10, 18
2 Tim 2:21	1 Cor 12:1–31	Heb 10:24–25	

Squandering giftedness dishonors the Lord, who gave it (Rom 12:3; cf. 1 Cor 12:11). Romans 12:6—the italicized words in the NASB ("each of us is to exercise them accordingly") are not in the original language, but the text carries the sense. Since each of us has gifts according to the grace given, we must exercise them in service until we drop! But there will some ashes because some burnt up (1 Cor 3:12–13).

Hindrances to Maximal Service

The Spirit wants to use me and wants to produce fruit through my life and use me as a vessel. But if sin overtakes our lives and becomes patterned, we squander the fruitfulness of service. Fleshly distractions must be starved in order to put ourselves in the position of maximum blessing.

1. Wickedness

– Maximal usefulness depends on abstaining from wickedness (2 Tim 2:19–22).

2. Laziness

a) Our culture is obsessed with not working hard, with vacation, and with living a pain–free life (Prov 18:9).

b) But the time is short (Eph 5:16).

Helps to Maximal Service

We are called to exercise our gifts "according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7) and "according to the proportion of … [your] faith" (Rom 12:6).

1. Press in to your sanctification (2 Tim 2:21).

2. Rejoice in God's sovereignty over the gifting of the body.

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a) God determines the diversity in the body (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12).

i) We are spiritual relatives, individual members of one another, interlocked with one another and attached to Christ the Head.

ii) God calls us to function within such a diversity.

iii) We don't need to be clones; everyone will not be like us.

b) God distributes the gifts as He pleases (1 Cor 12:4–7, 11).

c) God directs each part of the body.

i) You may look back and see how God directed you or diverted you from the broad channel to a narrower or particular area.

ii) You didn't necessarily choose that specific or unique area, you just went forward, and looking back you see that the Lord directed you to the places and people where your measure of faith would be most effective.

3. Recognize the interdependence within the body.

a) "For the body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor 12:14).

i) The body parts have different functions.

ii) No part of the body can say to another, "I have no need of you" (1 Cor 12:21).

iii) No single individual is God's unique, comprehensive gift to the body, making others unneeded.

iv) We must not wish for some other kind of gifting or function than what we have, or begin to imagine that we cannot be useful.

b) "The members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary" (1 Cor 12:22).

i) People with the speaking gifts tend to get more recognition.

ii) Those with gifts that are viewed as less prominent are the sometimes referred to as "behind the scenes people."

(1) They tend to be deemed less honorable, when in fact we are commanded to "bestow more abundant honor" (1 Cor 12:23).

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(2) It is their gifts that cause them to receive more recognition, because they are using their gifts to the max.

iii) We recognize everyone's usefulness and fruit bearing in the body.

iv) We are all peers in the body, no matter what God has given us to do.

4. Encourage others to maximize their gifting.

a) Implied here is that if you are not the one with the gifting listed, you ought to encourage the one who does have the gift to get after it (1 Cor 12:4–27).

i) Stir people up to greater love and do more for others (Heb 10:24–25).

ii) When we see someone sitting on the sideline, we need to ask them why they are tending to do very little and not fulfilling the biblical mandates.

iii) We should be praying for others to use their unique gifting to the fullest.

b) Don't despise the gifts given to others.

– Perhaps an exhorter is exercising his gift by faith and he is blessing the body. Do you:

(1) have a dislike for his exhortation, so you stifle him?

(2) want the same gift, so you are jealous?

(3) simply not like the fact that he is pointing his finger at you?

5. Look for needs to meet in the diverse body of Christ.

a) The needs will not be of only one kind; there will be a great variety of needs.

i) The needs are as varied as people. They vary as much as life and circumstance, trouble and trials, joys and sorrows.

ii) God is doing something in each person's life; help them in the areas in which God is working. That's where their greatest needs are.

b) Be intentional.

– When you walk into a fellowship, meet people, talk to them, intentionally learn their needs and seek to meet them.

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(1) God may use you with a thousand people in the same way.

(2) Or He may use you with one person in a thousand different ways.

(3) Meet needs not just on Sunday, but every day.

6. Remember the biblical motivations.

a) We are a safeguard for each other (Heb 10:24–25).

i) Trials and difficulties are coming.

ii) People are going to get caught up in sin.

iii) God will use you to guard and rescue people through your service or speaking or a combination of your gifts.

b) Exercising your gifts builds up the body of Christ (Rom 14:19; Eph 4:12–16).

c) We are "strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might" (Col 1:11; cf. vv. 9–14; 1 Pet 4:11b).

d) There are heavenly rewards to lay at Christ's feet for what He accomplished though you (2 Cor 5:9–10; Rev 22:12).

e) No greater motivation is needed than that the Spirit is in you granting a measure of faith and gifting to serve the body.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 10: MIRACULOUS GIFTS ARE NOT FOR TODAY
(by Jonathan Anderson)

The purpose of this teaching is to help all Christians understand that the miraculous gifts have ceased. Accepting this doctrine is important for all in the faith to help debunk the claims by the charismatic movements. Furthermore, understanding that the sign gifts have ceased will help all believers understand and discern the real/authentic work of the Holy Spirit.

History Shows that Miraculous Gifts Ceased

The miraculous gifts were practiced from time to time throughout church history. While the history of the practice of charismatic gifts is not authoritative, it is illustrative. In fact, those who believe the miraculous gifts are for today's church (Continuationists) recognize that there was a notable absence of miraculous gifting in the church until the early 1900s. Ironically, it would seem that Continuationists need to prove that the 1,900-year lack of miraculous gifts have ceased, while the Cessationists are saying that the status quo of 1,900 years continues today. Wayne Grudem is a notable Continuationist. He acknowledges that his position is new to the theological landscape from a historical perspective:

> "In previous generations, systematic theologies did not have chapters on spiritual gifts, for there were few questions regarding the nature and use of spiritual gifts in the church. But the twentieth century has seen a remarkable increase in interest in spiritual gifts, primarily because of the influence of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements within the church."[1]

History of Continuationism

- **Montanus**
  - The first notable claim to practice the miraculous gifts was Montanus[2] in the middle of the 2nd century.
  - Eminent historian Philip Schaff wrote,

    > "Montanism, in the first place, sought a forced continuance of the MIRACULOUS GIFTS of the apostolic church, which gradually disappeared as Christianity became settled in humanity, and its supernatural principle was naturalized on earth."[3]

- **Zwickau Prophets**
  - Thomas Münzer was a powerful speaker and influential leader in the Peasants' War during the 1520s in Germany. After he arrived in Zwickau, he stirred up religious excitement already begun by two other fanatics, Nicolaus Storch and Marcus Thomä Stübner.

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[1] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 1016.

[2] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (1858; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 2:417–22.

[3] Ibid., 423. Schaff's footnote on this quote says: "In this point, as in others, Montanism bears a striking affinity to Irvingism, but differs from it by its democratic, anti-hierarchical constitution. Irvingism asserts not only the continuance of the apostolic gifts, but also of all the apostolic offices, especially the twelvefold apostolate, and is highly ritualistic."

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- He appointed twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples. The local magistrates interfered and they were forced to leave.

- Philip Schaff explains,

> "These Zwickau Prophets, as they were called, agreed with Carlstadt in combining an inward mysticism with practical radicalism. They boasted of visions, dreams, and direct communications with God and the angel Gabriel, disparaged the written word and regular ministry, rejected infant baptism, and predicted the overthrow of the existing order of things, and the near approach of a democratic millennium."[4]

- **Edward Irving**
  - Edward Irving might accurately be called "The Morning Star of the Modern Charismatic Movement." Though trained and mentored briefly by the deeply spiritual and orthodox Thomas Chalmers, Irving went his own way theologically once he escaped from an assistant role in his own parish—the Caledonian Chapel in London (in 1821).

  - **Popularity**—He was a powerful speaker. His church grew quickly. He was a headliner. Poor and politician alike attended the chapel. The popularity and love of applause fed his innate desire for more influence and attention. In a chapter titled "Irving's Reaction to Popularity," Arnold Dallimore quotes B. B. Warfield:

> "Irving's sudden and unexampled popular applause did not completely turn his head, but it distinctly injured him. It left him an enthusiastic, simple-minded man; but it gave him overweening confidence in himself; and it infected him with the illusion that some high and world-wide mission had been committed to him."[5]

  - **Prophecy**—His ministry became focused on the charismatic gifts (1824–28).[6] Irving focused more and more on interpretation of prophecy. This certainly may have begun as a healthy focus on the reputed neglect of teaching about the Second Coming of Christ, but coupled with his penchant for the imaginative and fantastic, it was disastrous.

  - **Miraculous Gifts**—In the ensuing years, the Chapel became a hotbed for every spiritual gift. Prophecies were made for Christ to return on June 27, 1835.[7] Tongues were commonplace,[8] as well as interpretation.[9] Healings and the resurrection power

[4] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 7:381.

[5] Arnold Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving: The Fore-runner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1983), 38.

[6] Ibid., 60.

[7] Ibid., 132.

[8] See the section "The Modern Gift of Tongues Is Different Than the Biblical Gift," below. There, I document how the Irvingite movement was the first to postulate a gift of tongues that was ecstatic and unintelligible. This was a necessary

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were practiced, or attempted, but the inevitable failure caused doubt among outsiders, and despair to those loyal to the movement.[10]

- **Doctrinal Questions**—Beyond the dangerous practices, strange pneumatology, and aberrant eschatology, Edward Irving's orthodoxy fell into question over the issue of whether Jesus Christ had a sinful human nature.[11] He apparently never affirmed that Christ actively committed sin. He did, however, teach that Jesus shared a post-fall Adamic human nature, which was a sinful nature like ours. The emphasis on how similar Christ was to us, though always victorious, inevitably undermined the unique substitution of Christ in our place. "We overcoming sin as Christ overcame sin, we doing the same works as Christ by the Spirit, tended to become the *all-important* element in his teaching. The Christian's foundation, 'Christ died for our sins', was obscured."[12]

- **Disillusionment**—It is a sad commentary on the fruitlessness of such ministry that he lost popularity with many who were disillusioned by the fraudulent practices. He lost power in the church due to an establishment of apostles and prophets. Their authority kept Irving from being "little more than a servant, subject to their utterances and therefore to their commands."[13] With sad irony, Irving died in a state of expectancy—awaiting the gift of tongues, and healing from the sickness he endured. This healing would be "a testimony to all Britain of the reality of the charismatic gifts."[14] It never came, and he died on December 4, 1834.

History of Cessationism

Here are some choice quotes from faithful pastors in church history:

- **John Chrysostom (c. 344–407)**
  - **"**This whole place [speaking about 1 Corinthians 12–14] is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place."[15]

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emendation to their practice, which had been exposed in print as not being a real, human language as advertised for several years.

[9] Dallimore, *Edward Irving*, 106–7.

[10] Ibid., 107, 138, 145, 154, 156–57.

[11] Ibid., 79–82.

[12] Ibid., 82.

[13] Ibid., 161.

[14] Ibid., 168.

[15] *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 36.7. Chrysostom is commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:1–2 and introducing the entire chapter. Cited from *1–2 Corinthians*, in the Ancient Christian Commentary Series, 146.

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- "Argue not because miracles do not happen now, that they did not happen then… In those times they were profitable, and now they are not."[16]

- **Augustine (354–430)**
  - **"**In the earliest times, the Holy Spirit fell upon them that believe and they spoke with tongues, which they had not learned, as the Spirit gave them utterance. These were signs adapted to the time. For there was this betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues [languages] to show that the gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a sign, and it passed away."[17]

- **Martin Luther (1483–1546)**
  - Martin Luther risked personal safety to oppose the Zwickau Prophets. "As to the pretended revelations of the new prophets, he despised them, and maintained that an inspired prophet must either be ordinarily called by church authority, or prove his divine commission by miracles."[18]

  - **"**In the early Church the Holy Spirit was sent forth in visible form. He descended upon Christ in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16), and in the likeness of fire upon the apostles and other believers (Acts 2:3). This visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the establishment of the early Church, as were also the miracles that accompanied the gift of the Holy Ghost. Paul explained the purpose of these miraculous gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14:22, 'Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.' Once the Church had been established and properly advertised by these miracles, the visible appearance of the Holy Ghost ceased."[19]

- **John Calvin (1509–1564)**
  - **"**Though Christ does not expressly state whether He intends this gift [of miracles] to be temporary, or to remain perpetually in the Church, yet it is more probable that miracles were promised only for a time, in order to give luster to the Gospel while it was new or in a state of obscurity."[20]

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[16] *Homilies on 1 Corinthians,* 6.4; quoted by B. B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons, 1918), 46. Talbot W. Chambers translates it this way: "Do not then urge the fact that signs are not done now, as a proof that they were not done then. For as then they were usefully wrought; so now are they no longer so wrought" in Philip Schaff, ed., *NPNF,* First Series (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1997), 12:81.

[17] Augustine, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, 6.10. Philip Schaff, ed., *NPNF*, First Series (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1997), 7:497–98.

[18] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 7:382.

[19] Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians 4*, trans. by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1949), 150–72. This is from Luther's comment on Galatians 4:6.

[20] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, III:389.

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- "The gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time, has vanished away in order to make the preaching of the Gospel marvelous forever."[21]

- **John Owen (1616–1683)**
  - **"**Gifts which in their own nature exceed the whole power of all our faculties, that dispensation of the Spirit is long since ceased and where it is now pretended unto by any, it may justly be suspected as an enthusiastic delusion."[22]
  - And in a comment on the warning of Hebrews 6, he said, "It is true, those alone are here firstly and directly intended who in those days had received extraordinary or miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. But this, by just analogy, may be extended unto others, now those gifts are ceased in the church."[23]

- **Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)**
  - "The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as the gift of tongues, of miracles, of prophecy, &c., are called extraordinary, because they are such as are not given in the ordinary course of God's providence. They are not bestowed in the way of 'God's ordinary providential dealing with His children, but only on extraordinary occasions, as they were bestowed on the Prophets and Apostles to enable them to reveal the mind and will of God before the canon of Scripture was complete, and so on the primitive church, in order to the founding and establishing of the church in the world. But since the canon of Scriptures has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased. But the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, are such as are continued to the church of God throughout all ages; such gifts as are granted in conviction and conversion, and such as appertain to the building up of the saints in holiness and comfort."[24]
  - "And as these miraculous gifts of the Spirit were but temporary with regard to those particular persons that enjoyed them, so they are but for a season with regard to the church of God taken as a collective body. These gifts are not fruits of the Spirit that were given to be continued to the church throughout all ages. They were continued in the church, or at least were granted from time to time, though not without some considerable intermissions, from the beginning of the world till the canon of the Scriptures was completed."[25]
  - "But soon after that, the canon of Scripture being completed when the apostle John had written the book of Revelation, which he wrote not long before his death, these miraculous

[21] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.19.18.

[22] John Owen, *Works*, 4:518.

[23] Ibid., 7:45-46.

[24] Jonathan Edwards, "Charity More Excellent than the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit," Lecture II in *Charity and Its Fruits* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1854), 42–43.

[25] Jonathan Edwards, "The Holy Spirit Forever To Be Communicated To The Saints, In The Grace Of Charity, Or Divine Love," Lecture XV in *Charity and Its Fruits* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1854), 445–46.

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> gifts were no longer continued in the church. For there was now completed an established written revelation of the mind and will of God, wherein God had fully recorded a standing and all-sufficient rule for His church in all ages. And the Jewish church and nation being overthrown, and the Christian church and the last dispensation of the church of God being established, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were no longer needed, and therefore they ceased; for though they had been continued in the church for so many ages, yet then they failed, and God caused them to fail because there was no further occasion for them. And so was fulfilled the saying of the text, 'Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.' And now there seems to be an end to all such fruits of the Spirit as these, and we have no reason to expect them anymore."[26]

Before the end of the 19th century, Continuationists hardly had a list like this beyond the embarrassing exceptions mentioned earlier. We could put virtually every faithful gospel preacher from after the apostles until 1900 on this list.

The Modern Gift of Prophecy is Different than the Biblical Gift

For the revelatory gift of prophecy to be biblically valid today, it must be as infallible and authoritative as it was in the New Testament. The modern prophetic movement typically allows for prophecy that is less accurate and less authoritative than Scripture. This isn't consistent with biblical pattern.

Definition of prophecy:

1. to proclaim an inspired revelation, *prophesy*
2. to tell about something that is hidden from view, *tell, reveal*
3. to foretell something that lies in the future, *foretell, prophesy*[27]

This differs from both the verb for preaching and the noun "herald/preacher." Although both involve forth-telling, what is unique to prophecy is the revelatory aspect of the message. The herald simply declares the message of another. The prophet declares a message that he couldn't have acquired except by divine revelation. It might involve information that he couldn't acquire by his own personal knowledge (e.g., Matt 26:68, where the soldiers demand that Jesus prophecy who hit Him while His head was covered), or it may predict the future. Either way, prophecy was proven by 100% of its content being precisely accurate:

- Deut 18:21-22; cf. 1 Kgs 13:2–5 and 2 Kgs 23:15–16; Isa 7:16 and 8:3–4; Acts 11:28
- OT prophets may say, "Thus says the LORD" (among the hundreds of examples, see Exod 5:1; Isa 1:11).

[26] Ibid., 448–49.

[27] Fredrick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979, 2000): 890. (Hereafter, BDAG.)

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- New Testament prophets may say, "This is what the Holy Spirit says" (Acts 21:11).

In spite of these truths, Continuationists maintain that prophecy exists today, but it is not potentially fallible, and less authoritative that what we see in the Bible. According to Grudem, there are five indications that New Testament prophets did not speak with authority equal to the words of Scripture. These passages, however, don't uphold what Grudem says they do. Here are the problems with his argument, taking each of his five points in turn:

1. Acts 21:4—Grudem says: "This seems to be a reference to prophecy directed towards Paul, but Paul disobeyed it! He never would have done this if this prophecy contained God's very words and had authority equal to Scripture."[28]

    - But "through the Spirit" modifies "telling," not the exhortation to avoid Jerusalem ("telling" is the main verb; "to set foot" is a dependent infinitive).

    - Grammatically, the infinitive of verse 4, "to set foot," functions best as a purpose infinitive[29]: "speaking to Paul through the Spirit *in order that [so that] he might not go up to Jerusalem*" (my translation).

    - Grudem never mentions the prophecy that Paul received in 20:22–24. The Spirit's prophecy contained the revelation that Paul would be arrested or imprisoned. Paul says nothing about persuasion not to go to Jerusalem.

    - Acts 19:21 explains that the same Spirit who gives prophecy put intentionality in Paul's heart to go to Jerusalem: "Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia." Is the Spirit now contradicting Himself?

    - The order of events in this verse is virtually repeated in the next narrative:
        - inspired and infallible prophecy of imprisonment and suffering
        - followed by a well-meaning exhortation of personal concern
        - followed by Paul's commitment to obey the Lord in spite of persuasion attempted by well-meaning disciples

2. Acts 21:10-11—Grudem writes: "Agabus prophesied that the Jews at Jerusalem would bind Paul and 'deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles,' a prediction that was nearly correct but not quite: the Romans, not the Jews, bound Paul, and the Jews, rather than delivering him voluntarily, tried to kill him and he had to be rescued by force. The prediction was not far off,

[28] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1052.

[29] Grammatically, there are other ways that Luke could have made it clear that the persuasion not to go was part of the prophecy. He could have used direct discourse (with a *hóti* clause, virtually the same as our quotation marks), or indirect discourse with a finite verb. The infinitive (*to not set foot in Jerusalem*) could express the content of what they said through the Spirit, but it isn't likely in light of the options. It makes much more sense for the infinitive to function as a typical purpose/result of the prophecy, so that the disciples prophesied through the Spirit, with the intended result that he not go. This is the best option grammatically, and is, in fact, what happens in 21:11–14.

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but it had inaccuracies in detail that would have called into question the validity of any Old Testament prophet. On the other hand, this text could be perfectly well explained by supposing that Agabus had had a vision of Paul as a prisoner of the Romans in Jerusalem, surrounded by an angry mob of Jews. His own interpretation of such a 'vision' or 'revelation' from the Holy Spirit would be that the Jews had bound Paul and handed him over to the Romans, and that is what Agabus would (somewhat erroneously) prophesy. This is exactly the kind of fallible prophecy proposed above—reporting in one's own words something that God has spontaneously brought to mind."[30]

- This is an argument from silence. Acts 21:27–32 does not affirm that the Jews apprehended him *without* rope or the use of any restraint. The text never affirms that. Are we to assume that they talked Paul out of the Temple so that they could kill him in the Court of the Gentiles? That is equally absurd and unfounded as Grudem's explanation that they did this without binding him in any way.

- The idea that the Romans arrested Paul without the aid of the Jews is entirely unbiblical. Instead of reading about Roman soldiers peeling Jews off of Paul in order to arrest them against their wishes, 21:32–33 affirms exactly what Agabus said: "when [the Jews] saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul." The next thing that happens is a peaceable exchange where the commander arrests Paul.

- This agrees with what Paul himself says to the Roman Jews in Acts 28:17: "Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."

- Samuel Waldron is right to fear "that the interpretive approach used by Continuationists with reference to Agabus, if applied to the rest of the Bible, would uncover errors in many places where conservative Continuationists would not like to find them."[31]

3. First Thessalonians 5:19–21—Grudem writes, "If the Thessalonians had thought that prophecy equaled God's Word in authority, he would never have had to tell the Thessalonians not to despise it—they 'received' and 'accepted' God's Word 'with joy from the Holy Spirit' (1:6; 2:13). But when Paul tells them to 'test everything' it must include at least the prophecies he mentioned in the previous phrase. He implies that prophecies contain some things that are good and some things that are not good when he encourages them to 'hold fast what is good.'"[32]

    - The fact that a message needs to be scrutinized by the truth doesn't mean divine prophecy was often mixed with error

[30] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1052.

[31] Samuel E. Waldron, *To Be Continued? Are the Miraculous Gifts for Today?* (Merrick, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 2005), 67.

[32] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1054.

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- In 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2 we find that someone wrote an epistle that contained error. This doesn't mean that inspired epistles contain error.

- In Acts 17:11, the Bereans examined Paul's teaching with Scripture and Luke commended them for it.

- Grudem concludes, "This is something that could never have been said of the words of an Old Testament prophet, or the authoritative teachings of a New Testament apostle." Deuteronomy 13:1–5 and 18:15–22 say exactly the opposite of what Grudem affirms. The fact that OT prophecy must be examined by previous revelation doesn't make *any* portion of the OT fallible.

4. First Corinthians 14:29–38—Grudem writes, "[Paul] suggests that they should listen carefully and sift the good from the bad, accepting some and rejecting the rest… If prophecy had absolute divine authority, it would be sin to do this. But here Paul commands that it be done, suggesting that New Testament prophecy did not have the authority of God's very words."[33]

    - This argument is so similar to #3, that my answer above would sufficiently answer this argument.

    - However, the 1 Corinthians context gives us one additional truth—there is no such thing as picking and choosing when it comes to prophecy. We are not encouraged to test the prophecy in order to accept portions of it. No, the gift "discerning of spirits" refers to the diagnosis of the source of the prophecy. The other prophets evaluated the prophecy given (14:29) by using the gift of "distinguishing of spirits" (12:10). First Corinthians 12:3 explains that the source of the prophecy determines whether any of it or all of it is true!

5. Apostolic Preparations for Their Absence—Grudem writes, "The problem of successors to the apostles is solved not by encouraging Christians to listen to the *prophets* (even though there were prophets around) but by pointing to the *Scriptures*."[34]

    - His parenthetical comment begs the very question we are asking. Imagine the following interaction with Dr. Grudem: "Do prophecies continue today?" Grudem: "Yes, but they're fallible." "How do you know?" Grudem: "Because the apostles point Christians back to the Scriptures, not to prophecies." "Isn't that because prophecies cease, while the Scripture continue on?" Grudem: "No, because prophecies continue today." The argument that prophecies continue because they continue must be abandoned.

    - The *apostolic* command examined above to uphold and affirm prophecy (1 Thess 5:19–21) is problematic for Grudem's argument here.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 1055.

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The Modern Gift of Tongues Is Different than the Biblical Gift

For the miraculous gifts to be biblically valid today, they must be biblical in essence, purpose, and practice. The modern tongues movement is not faithful to the Bible in any of those three categories.

In order to understand the gift of tongues properly, let's ask the questions *What are they? Why do they exist? How were/are they used?*

- **What are they?**
    - The word "tongues" as a description of the spiritual gift comes from the Greek word *glōssa*, which means, in a literal sense, the organ in your mouth used for speaking, or metaphorically, a distinct spoken language.
    - The miraculous gift of tongues was an ability to speak a known language without acquiring that skill through a natural learning process. Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12–14 use the Greek word *glōssa* for "a language" or "a tongue." In addition to this word, Acts also uses *diálektos* (Acts 2:6, 8) for a "language of a nation or region."[35]
    - The miracle of tongues was *not* a miracle of the ear, but of the mouth. Some Continuationists would point to Acts 2:8, which says that everyone heard Christians speaking in their own language, in order to say that what was spoken may have been nonsensical, but the miracle occurred in the ears of the audience. However, we know that they heard what was actually coming out of the apostles' mouths because verse 4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance."
    - Paul's instruction on tongues in 1 Corinthians is just as clear. First Corinthians 14:10 literally reads this way, "If there happen to be so many types of languages (even "species" of languages or speaking) in the world, not even one is without meaning" (my translation).
- **Why do they exist?**
    - The purpose of tongues—why do they exist? Every spiritual gift is for the edification of the believers (1 Cor 12:7; 14:5–6, 12, 17, 26). This is true of tongues and every other gift.
    - But beyond this universal purpose of gifts, there is another *unique* purpose of tongues that Paul tells us about in 1 Corinthians 14:21–22—*it is a sign of condemnation on unbelieving Israel*. Here, Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11–12.
- **How were/are they used**? Seven rules protect tongues from abuse in 1 Corinthians 14:26–33:

[35] BDAG, 232.

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1. It must be for edification (26).
2. There must not be more than two or three in any service (27).
3. One must interpret (27).
4. The speaker must keep silent in the absence of an interpreter (28).
5. Others must judge the content (29).
6. The speaker must sit down and remain silent if another receives a fresh revelation while he is speaking (30).
7. Each must speak one at a time (31).

If the modern notion of unintelligible speech is not biblical, then where did it come from? Before the modern charismatic movement, tongues were universally regarded as the ability to speak a known language. As Arnold Dallimore records, this idea of tongues as actual languages

> "…was not a new idea. Rather, for centuries it had been believed that the gift of tongues, instead of being the production of unintelligible sounds, was the ability to speak a language which had not been learned. This had been the claim of the Montanists in the second century, and of several groups which used 'tongues' during the Middle Ages. The biographers of such Roman Catholic missionaries as Francis Xavier and Vincent Ferrer made it appear these men spoke in unlearned languages, although such claims did not stand up under examination."[36]

The answer goes back to Edward Irving. Here are the developing factors that contributed toward a redefining of the word "tongues":

- Up until 1831, Edward Irving had no doubts about the fact that the spiritual gift of tongues was actual, known human languages. He said of this phenomena:
  - "It is a mere abandonment of all truth to call it screaming or crying… And when the speech utters itself in the way of a psalm or spiritual song, it is the likes to some of the simplest and ancient chants in the cathedral service… So far from being unmeaning gibberish, as the thoughtless and heedless sons of Belial have said, it is regularly-formed[,] well-proportioned, deeply-felt discourse, which evidently wanted *only the ear of him whose native tongue it is*, to make it a very masterpiece of powerful speech."[37]

- By 1832, some of the followers were beginning to doubt the legitimacy of the movement. One young lady, Mary Campbell (Caird), claimed she could speak Pelew, Turkish and Chinese. She moved to Europe to maximize her ability of speaking in tongues for the purpose of evangelism. She and her husband "were immediately forced to recognize her gift of tongues did not enable her to speak any of the languages they

[36] Dallimore, *Edward Irving*, 115.

[37] Ibid., 116.

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came upon."[38] They returned to England, and dropped all missionary ambition and charismatic practice.

- George Pilkington was disillusioned with tongues and left the movement sometime before 1831. He published a pamphlet with the following subtitle: *Various interesting colloquies between the writer and Mr. Irving and his followers, and observations which manifestly show they are all under a delusion.*[39]

- By 1832, the fraudulent claim of real languages was thoroughly exposed. There was no chance of maintaining that this was the biblical gift of tongues. Rather than acknowledge the deceit and admit the whole thing was a hoax, Arnold Dallimore writes:

  > The difficulty was overcome by the assertion that there were two kinds of tongues in the New Testament: (1) those of the day of Pentecost which were languages and (2) those of the Church at Corinth which it was now claimed were merely the ecstatic utterance of incoherent sounds. And since the phenomenon which appeared in Scotland and London did not prove to be this first kind there was now a general acceptance of the idea that it was the second kind which was being experienced.
  >
  > The realization the tongues were not languages proved a further disappointment to Irving. But he satisfied his own mind in the matter by stating that God had as yet granted only the Corinthian type, that He had done this merely in order to introduce the restoration of the gifts, and that the Pentecostal type, the languages, would come later.[40]

- When the Irvingites couldn't respectably claim that their tongues-speaking was a real language, they changed their story which they had told for the past three years. Only after they were exposed did they finally discover that the Bible actually did teach two different kinds of tongues, and one of them happened to be the exact same unintelligible phenomenon that they were experiencing. This semi-plausible explanation is widely repeated today in spite of its lack of biblical merit.

The Modern Gift of Healing is Different than the Biblical Gift

The biblical gift of healing didn't refer to medical miracles sovereignly orchestrated by God. It refers to the gift given to an individual who would use that gift for the benefit of the church and confirmation of the apostolic message. In other words, the gift consisted in divine power healing the infirmed through the gifted individual; whereas, the unmediated miracle of healing happens perpetually according to God's sovereign will. The only examples of individuals using the gift of healing in

[38] Ibid., 157.

[39] Ibid., 121.

[40] Ibid., 157–58.

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action are apostles and their ministry associates (i.e., the seventy—Luke 10:9, and possibly two of the seven deacons: Stephen—Acts 6:8, and Philip—Acts 8:6, 13). Healing was performed by virtue of the spiritual gift's power, regardless of the faith of the person healed.

Healing ministries today are difficult to evaluate because they often have large differences among them. In spite of the differences, I have found some similarities. Healing ministries often believe one or both of the following:

1. Healing equals forgiveness.
2. Healing comes by faith.

Healing does not equal forgiveness.

- Healing disease is part of the partial reverse of the curse that will happen when Christ returns. Forgiveness is present and healing of the world and the sick is future for the apostles (Acts 3:18–21).
- True enough, some healings include forgiveness (Mark 2:1–11). However, some healings come with a rebuke for unbelief and future disobedience (Mark 1:40–45).

Healing doesn't occur because of the faith of the sick person.

- Luke 17:11–19—only one of the ten who were healed had faith.
- The phrase "your faith has saved you," is used exclusively of those who had faith. Some faith healers try to use these passages to point out that faith will heal you physically. However, it is only spoken to people who are saved spiritually. Often this involves someone who is healed physically, and saved by faith spiritually. But Jesus said it of the woman in Luke 7:36–50 who wasn't even sick, but she was a sinner.

Paul Taught That the Gifts End During the Church Age (1 Cor 13:8–13)

Paul actually teaches about the termination of the miraculous gifts in 1 Corinthians 13:8–13. The three gifts listed here are contrasted with the abiding realities of faith, hope, and love in verse 13. In fact, this contrast frames up the entire paragraph (vv. 8, 13 bookend the argument). If faith becomes sight, and hope is realized when He returns, then the things that are terminating must end before Christ's return. Otherwise, the contrast is meaningless and the whole paragraph falls apart.

It seems that Anthony Thiselton's dictum, which prevents anyone from being able to allude to this passage, has been embraced by many: "These verses should not be used as a polemic for either side in this debate."[41] I find this problematic. I don't want to read any theology into a text any more than the next guy, but *the text means something*. It is almost as though one has to act like 1 Corinthians 13 can't be touched—it is the honest interpreter's kryptonite. Although this is a difficult passage, I disagree that it shouldn't speak to the issue *when the passage is about the passing of three miraculous/revelatory gifts and their*

[41] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 1064.

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contrast with the abiding of three virtues. Let's ask three questions that have direct relevance for the cessation of the miraculous gifts:

1. **What is "the perfect" in verse 10?**

   - This translation is already an interpretation.

   - The term "the perfect" (*tò téleion*) can be used several ways. Two definitions of the word are hotly debated in the context of our verse: "1. pertaining to meeting the highest standard… *perfect, complete, expert*… 2. pertaining to being mature, *full-grown, mature, adult*…"[42] The meaning of a word must be determined by its context.

   - Ephesians 4:13—both the NASB and ESV translate the word "mature," because the context contrasts maturity with the picture of immaturity in the reference to a child. (Children aren't any more or less *perfect* that adults, but they are less *mature*).

   - 2 Corinthians 1:13–14—Paul contrasts the Corinthians' partial understanding of a previous letter with the full understanding that he wants them to enjoy. The terms he uses are "partially understand" and "fully understand" (ESV). The ESV translators nailed the meaning in 2 Corinthians 1:13. They know that *télos* should be translated "fully," because the word is contrasted with "partial" in verse 14. The terms translated "partially" and "fully" are the same Greek root words Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 13:9–10.

   - 1 Corinthians 13:9–11 is comparing and contrasting partial revelation or communication from God, with mature or complete revelation from God. The gifts listed in verse 9 are partial.

   - Paul has already paved the way for us to elevate Scripture over prophecy as a superior gift to the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul begins a list of gifts, ranked in order of importance. The latter gifts are unranked. He simply says, "then miracles, then gifts of healings, then…" But notice that the beginning of the list does rank the gifts. The first three in the list are also of preeminent importance: "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers." This helps us understand what he means when later he says, "Be intensely interested[43] in the greater gifts" (1 Cor 12:31; cf. 14:1, 12, 39). Although you are individually given gifts according to the sovereign distribution of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:11), as a church we should be earnestly and intensely interested in promoting the greater gifts because they edify and equip those around us. (All of chapters 12–14 bears this out.) So, what is the contribution of the first gift? The apostles gave us the New Testament Scriptures. This is the complete revelation that not only out-ranks prophecy (12:28), but also terminates its necessity upon its completion (13:10).

[42] BDAG, 995.

[43] BDAG, 427.

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2. What is the relationship among verses 10, 11, and 12?

- Verse 10 is the reality, 11 is the illustration, and 12 is the reason.

- 10—Paul explains that when the complete revelation of God arrives for the church, the partial revelation of prophecy and words of knowledge will be abolished.

- 11—Paul illustrates the difference between the two by picturing the speaking, thinking, and reasoning of a child (perhaps paralleling tongues, prophecy, and wisdom) as the partial revelation. The arrival of adulthood means the doing away with childish things. This adulthood pictures the arrival of complete revelation. It would be inaccurate to say that Paul is calling prophetic revelation childish and apostolic revelation adult-like. Nevertheless, it is a helpful illustration of what Paul does say—prophetic revelation is partial and Scripture is complete. Once we have Scripture, we put away partial things like prophecy and words of knowledge.

- 12—This is the reason why we would put off childish ways when we become a man. The view of God we have through completed revelation is described as "face to face" while the view of God through partial revelation is like a murky reflection.

    - "Face to face" is used in the OT of theophanies (Gen 32:30; Deut 34:10; Judg 6:22).

    - In Deuteronomy 5, Moses prefaces the Ten Commandments by saying, "The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, while I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain" (vv. 4–5). Notice that the Israelites didn't even see God. They saw fire, and their fear prevented them from wanting to hear directly from God. Instead, God graciously condescended and communicated to the people through Moses. God gave Moses verbal revelation (the first written revelation from God to man). So, this scenario of the Israelites seeing God "face to face" consisted of them receiving inspired written revelation of God's character through the intermediary of the prophet Moses. He stood between God and Israel, brought the revelation down to them, and this receiving of written revelation is seeing God face to face.

    - Compared to the obscurity of partial revelation in words of knowledge, seeing God in the completed revelation of His Word is seeing face to face. In this way, this passage is parallel to Deuteronomy 5:4–5.

    - The verb "know" is from *epiginṓskō*, which means among other things "to come to an understanding of, know exactly, or completely."[44] Usually, commentators take this as a reference to the knowledge we will have of God in heaven. Interestingly enough, it is never actually used that way in the Greek New Testament. Neither the noun nor the verb is used of our relationship with God

[44] BDAG, 369.

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or Christ in heaven. Instead, the consistent usage of these words refers to a true knowledge of something in this life. They are used of a true knowledge of God the Father,[45] God the Son,[46] God's will or command,[47] the guiltiness of sin,[48] true understanding of a message or letter,[49] and a saving knowledge of the truth.[50] The word group occurs sixty-four times in the New Testament. Yet, remarkably, it is never used in Revelation, nor is it used in the Epistles to refer to our heavenly knowledge of God. (Of course, many would say that Paul uses it here in 1 Corinthians 13:12 of heaven, but that is the very point we are examining.)

- Some assert that verse 12 refers to heaven. That is usually because we will have perfected minds. But that really isn't the issue because in heaven, though our minds are perfect, they are still finite. In that sense, we will never know God as He knows us. However, in Scripture, we can know God in the sense of *epígnōsis*. Not only is that what Paul refers to in Matt 11:27; Rom 1:28; 10:2; Eph 1:17; 4:13; Col 1:10; 3:10; 2 Pet 1:2, 3, 8, but also Paul boldly declares that through the Scripture, as he has the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). This isn't in the context of revelations and heavenly visions, but in the Spirit's work of illuminating the Christian to the implications of the inspired truths (2:11–15).

- For the future post-apostolic generation to cling to partial knowledge of God makes no sense because they can have the mind of Christ through the Scriptures.

3. Why must the miraculous gifts end before Christ's return?

- 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 has two contrasting bookends—*three things are terminating and three things are abiding.*
  - Verse 8b says, "but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away."
  - This is surrounded by 8a and 13a: "Love never fails" and "But now faith, hope, love, abide these three."

[45] Matt 11:27; Rom 1:28; 10:2; Eph 1:17; Col 1:10; 3:10; 2 Pet 1:3.

[46] Matt 11:27; Eph 4:13; 2 Pet 1:2, 8.

[47] Rom 1:32.

[48] Rom 3:20.

[49] 2 Cor 1:13–14.

[50] Luke 1:4; Col 1:6; 1 Tim 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1.

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- Prophecy will be shut down, or abolished, as will the word of knowledge. Tongues will cease and pass away. On the other hand faith, hope, and love all abide. When do faith and hope end? When faith becomes sight (2 Cor 5:7) and when hope is realized (Rom 8:24–25).

- Here is the impossible question for the Continuationist: "According to your view of the perfect/mature, these gifts will end at the return of Christ or the death of the saint. *If that is true, then how can the three things that are terminating end at the exact same time as faith and hope, which abide and continue?*" This impossible question shows how the Continuationist position destroys the entire point of the paragraph. You can't have the miraculous gifts terminating at Christ's return when they are contrasted with things abiding or continuing, that also happen to end at Christ's return.

- One Continuationist dared to answer this question this way: "Presumably in one sense Paul expects hope to continue beyond this life in the continued enjoyment of that for which we hoped… Put psychologically, we may ask: Will we stop looking forward in anticipation to what is ahead once we begin to enjoy the new heaven and the new earth?"[51] He fails to mention any passages that would teach this truth regarding faith. Regarding this aspect of hope, however, he believes that 1 Corinthians 15:19 teaches that our "hope is not merely the anticipation of the blessings to come, an anticipation no longer needed once those blessings have arrived, but a firm anchor in Christ himself." Although this statement may be true, it doesn't explain the passage. I don't see how the passage says that our hope in Christ Himself won't be realized in heaven. Otherwise, what do we make of the constant contrast between faith and sight, or hope and things already realized?[52] His dichotomy between hoping for blessings and hoping for Christ is foreign to the question of whether hope in Christ is realized at the beginning of the eternal state.

The Continuationists have no satisfactory explanation about why these three gifts receive instruction about their termination when, according to their view, all the gifts end at the same time. Verse 13 proves that Paul has good reason to warn them that the termination of these gifts precedes Christ's return. This paragraph (1 Cor 13:8–13) teaches that the miraculous gifts end before the return of Christ, when faith becomes sight and hope is realized.

Apostles and Prophets Were Foundation, Not Perpetual

The role of apostles and prophets were foundational to the church, in that their revelation of truth grounded the church for all ages. The truth of the gospel revealed through them was handed down once for all to the saints (Jude 3). Requirements of being an apostle are: 1) being an eyewitness to the resurrected Christ, 2) being personally commissioned by Christ, and

[51] D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* (Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1987), 74.

[52] For example, see Acts 23:6; 24:15; 26:6–7; Rom 4:18; 5:5; 8:20–25; Gal 5:5; Eph 1:18; Col 1:5, 27; 2 Cor 5:7; Heb 6:11–12; 11:1; 1 Pet 1:8, 21.

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3) being able to perform signs, wonders, and miracles as evidence of your apostleship. By their very nature apostles cannot exist beyond the first generation of the church. Since signs, wonders, and miracles attest to their message and ministry (next section), they have passed away with the apostles.

- Apostolic doctrine was foundational for the church:
  - Acts 2:42; Eph 2:19–20; 4:11; Jude 3
- Apostles, by definition, can't outlive the first generation of the church:
  - Jesus selected them (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13).
  - Judas was replaced by Matthias with two requirements (Acts 1:21–22):
    - Personal presence through Christ's earthly ministry
    - Personal eyewitness of His resurrection
  - Resurrection testimony (1 Cor 9:1; Acts 10:39–41; 1 Cor 15:4–9a)
- Since the apostles were foundational, and not perpetual, the signs that confirm an apostle are also not perpetual. Since the miraculous gifts (signs, wonders, and miracles) attested to the divine origin of apostolic ministry and message, they serve no purpose now that all the eyewitnesses of the resurrection have died. The church has been founded. All that is left is the ongoing edification on that foundation. At this point in the church age, to resurrect miraculous sign gifts is to resurrect apostles. To resurrect the role of an apostle is to return to laying the foundation all over again. To lay the foundation all over again is an arrogant rejection of the foundation already laid.

Signs, Wonders, and Miracles Confirm Divine Revelation

There is one final problem that Continuationists can't avoid in Scripture—the purpose of the miraculous gifts. Scripture consistently records that the purpose of the miraculous gifts (signs, wonders, and miracles) are for the proof that prophets and apostles are sent by God. Their message, by default, is also proven to be the message given them by God. God doesn't intervene in His created order by giving men supernatural abilities to perform signs, wonders, and miracles for no good reason.[53] It is always to affirm His revelation of truth.

The consistent explanation for the miraculous being performed by the hands of men is to accomplish a function of signifying or confirming the man and the message as being from God.

- Moses (Exod 4:1–5, 21, 30–31; Deut 4:2, 32–36; 12:32)
- Prophets
  - Prophets were visibly recognizable by their garments (Mark 1:6; 2 Kgs 1:8), but this was easy to imitate (Zech 13:4–5).

[53] Please don't misunderstand this to be referring to God's providential working of miracles, but only the gift of signs, wonders, and miracles to a man.

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  - Purpose of prophets' signs (1 Kgs 17:24; 18:36; Jer 32:20) Notice how Isaiah 7:1–8:2 gives immediately fulfilled prophecy in order to prove the truth of prophecy pertaining to Christ and His kingdom (Isa 9; 11–12; 49; 53).

- Jesus (Matt 11:2–6; John 10:25, 37–38; 14:10–11; Acts 2:22)
  - Consider the primacy of preaching, even over that of miracles in Mark 1:14-15, 21–28, and 33–38.

- Apostles (Acts 2:43; 4:33; 5:12; 8:14; 14:32; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:1–4)
  - Consider the primacy of preaching, even over that of confirmatory miracles in Acts 13:7–12; 19:8–20.
  - Consider Peter's concern about the termination of the apostolic ministry in 2 Peter 1:12–15.

The problem with the contemporary charismatic movement is that it isn't known for *its message*. What truth am I rejecting by rejecting the current practice of miraculous gifts? The miraculous attests to the message, as Numbers 14:22[54] says: "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice…" The rejection of God's revelation (which was attested by the signs and miracles) is the problem. So, with regard to the modern practice of the miraculous gifts, I am forced to ask the question, "What new revelation am I in danger of rejecting? What is your new message?" When the first century audiences were exposed to the apostles, no one doubted that the Christ they preached was the Messiah, that His resurrection had happened, and that the apostles were founding God's church. There is no correlating reality for the charismatics. If the miracles are real, their message must be more visible than the miracles themselves. And that message, which will never violate previously revealed truths, must be new as well. The content preached in the charismatic movement ranges from new and heretical to old and faithful, but it is never both faithful and new.

[54] Compare this with the warnings that allude to this narrative and the danger of rejecting of God's voice/Word (Ps 95:7–11; Heb 3:7–4:13).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 11: THE DANGERS OF FALSE TEACHERS
Study 1: Know Your Enemy

Satan has a methodical process to lead men astray. There is always a lie involved, trying to misdirect us.

Bible passages for study:

2 Cor 11:13–15	Eph 6:10–12	Rev 12:9	1 Cor 3:18
Gen 49:17	Rev 2:24	Gen 3:1–5	1 Pet 5:8
1 John 2:15–16	Prov 21:17	Heb 11:25–26	

1. Men are no match for Satan, humanly speaking.

    a) Our minds are susceptible to his craftiness, and he leads us astray by deception.

    b) He has specific methods to lead us astray.

    c) He uses lies to misdirect us.

2. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

    a) He deceives the whole world (Rev 12:9)!

    b) He deceives entire cultures and nations.

    c) He leads them to perform acts of evil and atrocities.

    d) He deceives people to believe that they will inherit a sensual paradise.

3. Satan attacks where the influence is greatest.

    a) He attacks through a leader or an influencer, someone in a position to lead groups or many individuals astray.

    b) Only rarely will he focus on someone on the fringe, unless he can seize an opportunity to snare a leader or an influencer through that person.

4. Satan has deep knowledge and resources ("the deep things of Satan" [Rev 2:24]).

"His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate; on earth is not his equal." (Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God")

5. Satan exploits the use of Scripture to his advantage.

    a) He twists the truth as a means to deceive.

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b) Satan's first victory was getting Eve to dialogue about God (Gen 3:1–5).

i) He simply wanted Eve to think that two creatures could have a casual conversation about the Creator!

ii) His success was in getting Eve to converse about the nature of God.

c) Men will muse on our own human opinion.

i) We are far more prideful in our arrogance than we realize.

ii) Satan uses that pride to lead us astray.

d) "Let no man deceive himself" (1 Cor 3:18).

6. "The schemes [*methodeía*] of the devil"—three observations about Satan's schemes:

a) Snares are placed where they cannot be seen, where they won't be obvious.

b) Snares are laid in our path.

i) We don't have to go out of our way to find snares; the snares will find us.

ii) "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

iii) Satan will find on our paths the particular distraction that appeals to us individually.

(1) He is not omniscient, but he is intelligent, and he studies us to know our weakness.

(2) Like Roman soldiers, we need to "gird up our loins," to tie up the loose ends of our lives so that nothing can be caught onto or grabbed as we run into battle and about our lives (cf. 1 Pet 1:13; Heb 12:1).

c) Snares are craftily set.

i) He has deep knowledge and resources, and we are called to know his schemes (Eph 6:11).

Suggested resource: Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*.

ii) Don't allow Satan a foothold by holding on to bitterness or lack of forgiveness.

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7. Satan's most useful tool is the promise of pleasure.

a) Temporal pleasures of the body and mind (1 John 2:15–16)

i) The lust of the flesh

ii) The lust of the eyes

iii) The pride of life/accomplishments

iv) "Christian hedonism"

b) Eternal pleasures—persuading jihadists to kill and commit suicide for the promise of eternal sensual pleasures.

c) If we love pleasure or self-gratification, Satan will exploit those weaknesses. "He who loves pleasure will become a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not become rich" (Prov 21:17).

d) Satan promises relief.

e) Pleasure is a hallmark of our age. We love fantasies and self-exaltation, self-pleasure and narcissism.

Bear the reproach of Christ as Moses did (Heb 11:24–26). He chose to be mistreated with the people of God, and willingly bore the reproach of Christ rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 11: THE DANGERS OF FALSE TEACHERS
Study 2: The Infiltration of False Teachers

False teachers infiltrate with subtlety. The battle in the church is the battle for truth. Deceivers enter with subtlety, dressed attractively to appear more true than the truth itself. False teachers oppose the gospel and demean Christ.

Bible passages for study:

2 Cor 11:12–15	1 John 2:18, 20; 4:3	2 Cor 10:5	Gal 2:4
2 Pet 2:12, 14, 17	Eph 4:14	Acts 20:29–30	2 Pet 2:1
Matt 7:15; 24:11, 24	Mark 13:6	Luke 21:8	Phil 3:2
Rom 16:18	1 Tim 4:1–2	1 Tim 6:4	Titus 1:10, 16
Titus 3:10–11	2 Pet 2:12, 14, 17	2 Peter 3:3, 16	1 John 2:22
1 John 4:5–6	2 John 7	Jude 12–19	

1. Resources at Satan's disposal

    a) Schemes and strategies designed to lead men astray

    b) Demonic hierarchies and spiritual forces

    c) False teachers disguised as "angels of light"

    d) Slight deviations that ultimately develop a massive divide from Scriptural truth

    e) Sincere men who become sincerely wrong

2. Vulnerable condition of the church

    a) Often asleep regarding the dangers of error

    b) Leaders not paying attention to the truth

    c) Lacking a biblical framework for exposing false teachers and doctrinal error

    d) The prevailing attitude is that love now means "to accept without question," resulting in decades of refusing to face the implications of error and truth.

    e) Satan and false teachers are clever and devise crafty means of implementing his resources.

    f) The liberal church calling the true church too narrow

    g) The liberal church pandering to the fads of the culture and criticizing the true church for lack of love

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h) Many accept at face value people who say they love Jesus without inquiring what they mean and who they are talking about.

3. Defenses against false teachers and "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1)

a) Love the truth. Our weapon is truth (2 Cor 10:5); it destroys false ideas and error (Eph 4:14).

b) Error cannot survive in an environment where truth is exalted, taught, believed, and lived out.

c) Learn to spot heresy early on. Expose the subtleties of the enemy. We are not "heresy hunters," but lovers of the truth.

d) Learn to filter everything through the grid of Scripture.

e) "Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than the truth itself." — Irenaeus of Lyons (d. AD 202), *Against Heresies*

f) When our minds are filled with truth, we have the "biblical radar" to detect these errors and false teaching.

4. Difficulties in identifying false teachers

a) They are not always easy to spot. They sound like sheep for a long time, before they expose themselves or are exposed.

b) Paul warned that "savage wolves" would come disguised as sheep "from among your own selves" (Acts 20:29–30).

c) "Be on guard" implies that we should hold our minds in an attitude of attentiveness.

d) "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt 7:15).

e) "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many" (by addition to or subtraction from the truth) (Matt 24:5).

f) They disguise themselves as "an angel of light" and "servants of righteousness" (2 Cor 11:14–15).

5. Signs and methods of false teachers

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a) The rise of false teachers is inevitable and foretold (2 Pet 2:1).

b) They teach things that oppose the gospel or introduce "a different gospel" (Gal 1:6).

c) They demean Christ and His sacrifice by adding works to it.

d) They put on a false front of religious activity and vocabulary.

e) Their aim is to deceive, so they learn the language of God's people so they can secretly introduce their false teaching.

f) They seek the naïve and the ignorant, beguiling the unsuspecting and those in self-induced ignorance. Proverbs calls these naïve as "simple," having no filter.

g) They find one to lead astray, then another, gaining support among the sheep and adding to their ranks.

h) They introduce their teachings secretly, behind the scenes, and with the right vocabulary among those who lack discernment.

i) They question authority and come up with new ways to describe old truth; they devise subtle ways to question conventional orthodoxy and wisdom.

j) They promote some new view that no one else has seen.

k) E.g., N. T. Wright and his "new perspective" on Paul/Second Temple Judaism.

6. Biblical titles of false teachers

a) "False prophets" (Matt 7:15; 24:11, 24; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1)

They act the part of divinely-inspired prophets, but speak falsehoods under the name of divine prophesies.

i) They come with messages beginning with "Thus sayeth the Lord."

ii) In cessationist churches (which teach that the Scriptural canon is closed, and no new revelation is to be found outside the Scripture), there is no "Thus sayeth the Lord" outside of the Bible.

b) "False Christs" (Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22; cf. Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8)

False Christs claim the office of Messiah. They are easier to spot and usually end up as a guru such as Jim Jones and David Koresh.

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c) "False apostles" (2 Cor 11:13)

False apostles preach "a different gospel" (Gal 1:6), seeking to control people with a claim to apostolic authority, to bring people under bondage. This can happen more easily in non-cessationist churches and in some charismatic bodies, as they allow for the continuation of apostolic authority in this age.

d) "False brethren" (2 Cor 11:26; Gal 2:4)

False brethren come into congregations and seek to bring others into slavery to the externals.

e) "False circumcision" (Phil 3:2)

Related to the false brothers above, they likewise seek to bring people under the law, worshiping the externals via circumcision or various forms of law-keeping. According to Paul, they are "dogs" and "evil workers" (Phil 3:2) and put their "confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:3) rather than in Christ.

f) "Antichrists" (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7)

i) Antichrists strike at the Person, character, work, and nature of Christ.

ii) They speak in generic terms about the atonement.

iii) They use vague terms about His deity, and speak in generic phrases and generalizations.

iv) They deny the incarnation of Christ.

v) They leave the church because they were never of the church (1 John 2:19).

vi) The current attack on the atonement and penal substitution is in the spirit of antichrist and by Satan himself.

7. Other descriptive titles

a) "Savage wolves" (Acts 20:29)—They stalk, pounce, and run in packs, not sparing the flock.

b) "Slaves … of their own appetites" (Rom 16:18)—They are driven by a craving to consume.

c) "Dogs" and "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil 3:2, 18)

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d) "Deceitful workers" (2 Cor 11:13)—They use manipulative tactics to hone their subtleties.

e) Apostates, liars, Christ-rejecters (1 Tim 4:1–2; cf. 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 2:22)

f) "Conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim 6:4)

g) "Men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth" (1 Tim 6:5)

h) "Rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers" and false professors (Titus 1:10, 16)

i) "Factious … perverted … self-condemned" (Titus 3:10–11)—Their thinking is twisted.

j) "Unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct … reviling where they have no knowledge … stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions … having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way, they have gone astray … springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved" (2 Pet 2:12–15, 17).

k) "Mockers … untaught and unstable" (2 Pet 3:3, 16)

l) "From the world … [of the] spirit of error" (1 John 4:5–6)

m) "Deceivers" (2 John 7)

n) "Hidden reefs … caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. … grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. … devoid of the Spirit" (Jude 12–13, 16, 19).

o) These descriptions describe the tactics and results of false teachers. They are in every fellowship, without exception.

8. Some current or modern examples of false teaching

a) Baptismal regeneration is a false gospel of the Mormon church, the Nazarene churches, the Church of Christ, and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

b) Human works and "open theism" are heretical as they challenge the nature and attributes of God.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 11: THE DANGERS OF FALSE TEACHERS
Study 3: Errors and Tactics of False Teachers

If we permit ourselves to indulge the spirit of the age (the "spirit of tolerance") we will not be able to filter out the deception sent by the enemy. We will need to ask hard questions if we intend to discern error. If we merely discuss gospel generalities without discussing gospel specifics, how will we protect the church and our families? We must not be afraid of hostility or be concerned about popularity, but rather we must pursue doctrinal precision and clarity (2 Cor 4:2–4). This study will look at two biblical examples of error promoted by false teachers, two broad tactics used by false teachers, and two types of false teachers.

Bible passages for study:

Col 1:15–2:23	Titus 1:10–16	Col 2:4, 8–9	2 Tim 3:13
2 Tim 2:14–18	Acts 17:11	Titus 1:10–16	Ps 105:15
Gen 20:6–7	Rom 16:17	2 Pet 2	

1. Two kinds of errors surfaced in Asia Minor.

    a) Gnosticism taught that ordinary Christians could not discern the "mysteries" of Christ.

        i) They allegedly needed "ascended/initiated" leaders to explain the mysteries to them.

        ii) Yogis, gurus, and cultic leaders engaged in speculation about the nature of Christ.

        iii) Jim Jones and David Koresh are representative of this type of false teacher/messiah.

        iv) Prosperity and Word of Faith teachers also promise this kind of "ascended knowledge."

    b) Works righteousness followed on the heels of Gnosticism.

    Speculation about the nature of Christ led to efforts to bind the conscience of believers with rules and regulations: "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (Col 2:21; cf. vv. 4, 8–9).

Don't allow wrangling about words, empty chatter, and speculations to draw us away from gospel truths (2 Tim 2:14–18). God's Spirit produces a hunger in the soul for gospel truth. Search the Scriptures to discern truth (Acts 17:11).

2. Tactics of false teachers

    a) Tactic #1: deception and subtlety (Titus 1:10–16)

        i) False teachers use deception; their subterfuge will not be blatant.

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ii) They are not going to come into the church yelling "I have some error I want you to believe!" They come as an "angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14).

iii) The church cannot survive if believers and leaders cannot detect error when it comes up (Heb 5:14).

iv) Deceivers go through entire households for the sake of money. Our homes should be biblical filters, so that our children cannot be swayed by error.

(1) Jehovah's Witnesses come to our homes. Can we discern the error in their presentations sufficiently to defend ourselves and our families?

(2) Other groups try to draw Christians away from their church for "discipling" and "Bible study" in commercial settings (e.g., coffee shops) to draw them into error.

– These groups have no worship or communion service, and no place to baptize or catechize new believers.

– Groups like these tend to be led by those who have an aversion to authority. They in turn find believers who have a similar aversion to authority.

– These groups will question the authority of the Bible and of qualified church leadership.

– They lead their followers into error; they are "deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim 3:13).

v) These false teachers are culpable and liars, though they have deceived themselves.

(1) Never give any ground to a false teacher in any way that minimizes his culpability.

(2) Some might be genuinely deceived, but others are nothing less than God-haters.

b) Tactic #2: twisting the Scriptures

i) Scripture twisting is using a verse or passage and stripping it of its contextual meaning, then twisting it to fit the false teacher's heretical doctrine.

ii) They use ambiguous and imprecise words and phrases.

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iii) False teachers warn their followers not to question their teaching or their authority to make the claims they make: "Touch not God's anointed" is a warning they often invoke, twisting the context of Psalm 105:15 and Genesis 20:6–7.

(1) Here, the psalmist is recounting God's providential care of the patriarchs and Jacob and his family.

(2) The false teacher appropriates this passage and applies it to himself, his teaching, and his authority.

(3) These men (and women) contradict themselves, often in the same room or conference.

iv) They introduce skepticism about the Bible's trustworthiness.

(1) They often use Bible verses next to or in conjunction with writings of false religions.

(2) They might acknowledge the Bible as God's Word, but introduce other writings (as do the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses).

v) They go outside the bounds of orthodox hermeneutics, taking verses out of their context. Believers should know some of the basic principles of proper hermeneutics, such as understanding the context of the passage, the genre of the particular book, the intent of the author, and the reason the book was written.

(1) False teachers will allegorize or imply deeper or multiple meanings to a single passage.

(2) False teachers will introduce subjectivism into their teaching. They will determine for themselves a verse's meaning based on how he or she feels about it.

(3) They imply that we cannot know for certain what the author intended.

vi) False teachers are never interested in the precise teaching of Scripture. Few have studied the original languages or become proficient in them.

vii) They also utilize wrong doctrine to divide the church (Rom 16:17). They create hindrances, introducing subtle doctrinal changes for the purpose of dividing believers.

3. Two types of false teachers

a) Those who introduce heretical teaching and "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1)

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b) Those who live and preach practical antinomianism (2 Pet 2)

i) They love the world and have lives of sin and sensuality.

ii) They teach gospel truth, but won't apply it to their own lives.

iii) The current scene of American evangelicalism is rife with false teaching, practical antinomianism, and pragmatic methodology, which has filled the church with unbelievers.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 11: THE DANGERS OF FALSE TEACHERS
Study 4: Word of Faith and the Prosperity Gospel

The principal element of Word of Faith/Prosperity Gospel preaching is an appeal to the flesh. The appeals are material wealth and power over people and things, which all stoke the cravings of the flesh. Word of Faith teachers use Scripture twisting and heretical beliefs to advance their "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1). There are three main doctrines of Word of Faith/Prosperity Gospel teachers.

Bible passages for study:

Phil 3:19	2 Pet 2:10	Jude 8–16	2 Tim 3:13
Gen 3:4–5	Isa 53:5	1 Pet 2:24	1 Tim 6:8, 15
Pss 47:2; 103:19	Dan 4:17	Ps 86:2	John 10:33–35
2 Cor 4:4	2 Cor 5:21	1 Pet 2:24	Heb 4:14–16
John 17:3	1 Cor 1:30	John 19:30	Mark 11:23–24
John 14:14	1 Tim 3:3	Luke 12:15	Luke 9:23

1. Introduction to the "claims" and "names" of the Word of Faith Prosperity Gospel

    a) Familiar names for these movements: faith formula; hyper-faith; health, wealth, and prosperity; "name it and claim it."

    b) Some leading names in the movement: Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Charles Capps, Frederick K. C. Price, Creflo Dollar, T. D. Jakes, and Joel Osteen.

2. False teachers "speak" to the supernatural forces, "revil[ing] angelic majesties" (2 Pet 2:10; Jude 8).

    a) But true demonic forces don't have to deal with false teachers; they already have them!

    b) They are already controlled by demonic forces; they are "deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim 3:13).

3. Satan usually works through the false doctrines taught by these faith teachers. He entices the leaders of these movements and their followers through the heretical doctrines they preach, to perpetuate their insidious teachings.

    a) Not everyone who has become involved in these movements are unbelievers.

    b) Many are newly saved and ignorant.

    c) God for His own purposes leaves them in a spiritual "wilderness" until He delivers them to a good church for solid gospel teaching.

4. Principal tenets of the Word of Faith/Prosperity Gospel

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a) Practitioners believe they use God to get what they want. Scripture affirms, however, that God uses human beings (and all creation) to get glory for Himself!

b) The Holy Spirit is a power, not a Person, to be used by practitioners for material gain.

c) False teachers claim they receive new revelation given to them secretly. It is always information that has been hidden from the church for years and "given" to the false teacher for the "benefit" of the church.

5. Four heresies of the Word of Faith/Prosperity Gospel

a) Man is sovereign, not God.

i) Jesus gave all His authority to the church.

ii) This power is not delegated power through the work of Christ by the Holy Spirit, but direct power.

iii) God has bound Himself to spiritual laws that govern prosperity, and is bound by those laws to bestow prosperities (even to unbelievers!).

iv) If the practitioner exercises his "faith" and "belief" in those claims, then God is obligated to fulfill those claims.

v) Word of Faith teachers are known to utter outlandish and heretical things, including:

– having personal visitations from Jesus

– travelling to heaven and back

– receiving direct revelation

– telling God what to do

– having the creative power of God in word form

– speaking to your problems in Jesus' name

b) On the cross, Jesus earned the right for men to be physically healed and to be "born again" into the God-status.

i) For a proof text they rely on Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24: "By His stripes, you were healed."

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– This is an example of Scripture twisting, taking a verse and stripping it from its context to support the false teacher's position.

– The passage from Isaiah and 1 Peter have nothing to do with our physical healing or material prosperity, but Christ's atoning death for our sins, and our guilt imputed to Him.

ii) Another proof text they use is Psalm 82:6: "I said, 'You are gods.'"

– Their claim is that God declares that human beings are gods, yet the verse continues to say that we "will die like men and fall like any one of the princes."

– The context of the verse has nothing to do with man's imagined deity/divinity but with our being image-bearers, the highest of God's creation, though corrupted by sin. It is "Creator/creature" language, not testimony to our deity.

– See John 10:33–35 for the actual intent of the verse as applied by Jesus Himself.

iii) These false teachers claim that:

– Believers are little gods.

– Jesus was born again, and other born-again people can defeat Satan like Jesus did.

– Jesus' utterance of "I AM" is something we can say of ourselves.

c) Jesus gave up His deity to save sinners.

i) This heresy denies that Jesus came to earth as God, and holds that He came only as a man. But in truth:

– Jesus was fully God throughout His entire earthly existence and on the cross. He was never not God and never ceased to be God.

– According to Hebrews 4:14–16, Jesus, as our High Priest, took a foreign guilt on Himself, yet was "without sin." Our guilt was imputed to Him.

– He was "made … sin" for our sake and took on our guilt (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24).

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– "Propitiation" is the word for Christ's sacrifice that assuaged the Father's wrath against our sin. Our guilt was charged to Christ's account and His sacrifice satisfied God's wrath against sin.

ii) According to this heresy, Jesus had to be punished in hell to pay that ransom. But in truth:

– The atonement didn't take place in hell; it took place on the cross: "It is finished" (John 19:30).

– Jesus did not need to be born again, nor did he need eternal life; He is eternal life (John 17:3)!

– Jesus didn't buy our redemption for us; He is our redemption (1 Cor 1:30)!

d) Faith is a law, a force like natural law.

i) In contrast to the Scriptures, faith is not submission and entrustment to God; any person can lay claim to what he wants "by faith," through positive confession.

ii) Words have creative power, you can have whatever you say, but you must say it.

iii) Practitioners believe their words have magical ("spiritual") power behind them.

iv) They are taught to ignore the realities of sin, sickness, and weaknesses because they fear the negative influences on their positive confessions.

v) Practitioners inevitably blame those who suffer, saying they lacked faith or failed to maintain their "positive confession."

vi) Proof texts for Word of Faith teachers

(1) Mark 11:23–24 (NKJV): "For assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them and you will have them."

(2) John 14:14 (NKJV): "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

– Both of these are examples of Scripture twisting; neither of these verses in context speaks of material prosperity or man's sovereignty over God.

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– The Mark passage has nothing to do with mountain-moving, but with faith and reliance on Christ; the passage from John is actually about the Spirit's indwelling presence to align our will with His will.

6. Proof texts refuting the Word of Faith/Prosperity Gospel

a) Regarding God's absolute sovereignty: 1 Tim 6:15; cf. Pss. 47:2; 103:19; Dan 4:17.

b) Regarding the love of money: 1 Tim 3:3; cf. Luke 9:23; 12:15; 1 Tim 6:8.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 12: A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY
(by Matt Johnston)

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- **What Is Church History?**
  - Church History is the study of the unfolding of Christ's promise to build His church (Matt 16:18).
  - "There are two histories; there is what we may call 'The History of the Church,' that is, of human institutions, forms, doctrines, and actions; and 'The History of Christianity' which has brought into the world, and still preserves, a new life, a life divine, the history of the government of that King who has said, 'the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life'" (J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, "The History of Christianity," delivered in Geneva, 1832).
- **What Is Historical Theology?** (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 23–29)
  - "Historical theology is the study of the interpretation of Scripture and the formulation of doctrine by the church in the past."
  - Synchronic Approach: Focuses on theology in a certain time, a particular theologian, or a specific theological school or tradition. For example: the theology of Martin Luther, Calvin's understanding of providence, or the Trinity in the 4th century.
  - Diachronic Approach: Studies the development of theology throughout the entirety of church history. For example: a study of justification or eschatology throughout the ages: ancient, medieval, and modern.
- **Why Study Church History and Historical Theology?**
  - Christianity is a religion rooted in history:
    - Christianity is not merely an abstract philosophy, but is rooted in the reality of history, most importantly the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15; 1 John 1:1–3).
    - Beginning with Pentecost, God has been saving His elect and gathering them together into churches in time, space, and history.
  - Context gives us perspective:
    - "The history of the church has practical value for every Christian, as a storehouse of warning and encouragement, of consolation and counsel" (Schaff, *Church History*, 1:21).
    - "Why is it important to hold that Christ is one person, two natures? Why do Protestants hold to justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness through faith? The doctrines themselves, bluntly stated, can sometimes seem abstract and irrelevant; but when they are set in the context of the church's history and life, their true significance and the reasons why they have been formulated in the way they have, all become apparent" (Trueman, "The Trials of Church History," *The Trials of Theology*, 134).
  - Saints before us have been illuminated by the Spirit:

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- Seeing how those who have come before us have interpreted and interacted with Scripture can help us understand the Scriptures more faithfully.
- "The Fathers are not Scripture. They are senior conversation partners about Scripture and its meaning. We listen to them respectfully, but we are not afraid to disagree where they err" (Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers,* 29).
- Doctrines have been articulated for a long time in a certain way for a reason. We do well to think twice before abandoning an orthodox articulation of a particular doctrine.
- To embrace the value of church history (tradition) is not to embrace tradition in the Roman Catholic sense, setting it on equal footing with Scripture (cf. the two-source theory, Council of Trent, 1546).
- "A person wearing tinted glasses can avoid the conclusion that the entire world is tinted by being conscious of the glasses themselves. Likewise, if we are to break free from an undue weight of tradition, we must begin by understanding what that tradition is, how we came to be where we are, and how particular elements in our past color our view of the present. It is then that we are free to choose which elements in the past—and in the present—we wish to reject, and which we will affirm" (Gonzáles, *The Story of Christianity,* 1:xvii).

- What is newer isn't necessarily better:
  - "Historical theology can guard Christians and churches from the penchant for the novel, the yearning for relevancy, and the tendency to follow strong leaders who are biblically and theologically shallow" (Allison, *Historical Theology,* 26).
  - The Reformers certainly didn't view themselves as beginning a new church. Calvin quotes Augustine hundreds of times in his *Institutes* and Luther's commentaries are filled with citations of the Church Fathers.
  - "There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books. … [I]f he must read only the new or only the old, I would advise him to read the old. … A new book is still on its trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. It has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages, and all its hidden implications (often unsuspected by the author himself) have to be brought to light" (C. S. Lewis, "Preface," Saint Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 11–12).
- Today's heresies are just the old ones recycled:[1]
  - "[T]here are few errors or heresies around today that do not have clear parallels and antecedents in church history."

[1] Adapted from Trueman, "The Theological Importance of Criminal Profiling, or The Case for Church History, Part 1," http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2009/07/the-theological-importance-of-criminal-profiling-or-the-case-for-church-history-part-1/.

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- "Open theism, with its denial of God's comprehensive knowledge of the future? Think 17th-century Socinianism."
- "Mormonism, with its denial of the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ? Think fourth-century Arianism."
- "Modern denials of penal substitutionary atonement? Think 17th-century Socinianism and 18th-century Unitarianism."

▪ "There is nothing like reading modern theology without any historical context to make us prey for any doctrinal cowboy or know-nothing who rides into town. Evacuate Christianity of its history and you leave a dangerous vacuum that can be filled with any old nonsense."

o Church History helps us understand Roman Catholicism:

▪ "Historically speaking we must differentiate between 'lowercase-c' catholic Christianity and 'capital-C' Roman Catholic Christianity" (Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers*, 23)

- The word "catholic" comes from the Greek word *katholikos* (καθολικός) and means "general" or "universal." Already in the second century, long before the first real pope in the medieval sense, we read of "all the congregations of the holy catholic church in every place" (Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1.1) and "the whole catholic church throughout the world" (Martyrdom of Polycarp, 8.1).

▪ What are we to think of things like "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" (1994)?

- J. C. Ryle argues that when there is talk of snuggling up to Roman Catholicism, we must remember that to join hands with Rome is to forsake the truths for which those who came before us died (he writes of the English Reformation):
  - "In the name of the Lord let us set up our banners. If ever we would meet Ridley and Latimer and Hooper [all martyred by Rome] in another world without shame, let us 'contend earnestly' for the truths which they died to preserve. There is a voice in the blood of the martyrs. What does that voice say? It cries aloud from Oxford, Smithfield, and Gloucester [places where they were killed]—'Resist to the death the Popish doctrine of the Real Presence, under the forms of the consecrated bread and wine in the Lord's Supper!'" (J. C. Ryle, *Light from Old Times*).[2]

o Historical Theology can help keep us from being overly self-focused:

[2] Available as a free e-book: https://www.monergism.com/light-old-times-ebook.

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- "A … benefit that historical theology renders the church is to protect against the individualism that is rampant today among Christians … This rich heritage protects against the tendency to select the doctrines one likes and to reject those one does not like, thus giving in to one's sinful propensities" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 27).
- We need to have our hearts stirred by the radical examples of the men and women who have followed Jesus before us. In every age we find examples of those who denied themselves, took up their cross, and followed Christ. We do well to remember our faith is the same as theirs (Jude 3):
    - The Church Fathers who were martyred for their faith at the hands of the Romans in the first centuries of the church (e.g., Ignatius, Polycarp)
    - 16th-century English reformers martyred under Henry VIII for denying transubstantiation and purgatory or translating Scripture into English (e.g., Bilney, Frith, Tyndale) and those martyred under the reign of "Bloody" Queen Mary I (e.g., Latimer, Hooper, Cranmer)
    - The 18,000 Scottish Covenanters executed under Charles II between 1661 and 1688 over the issue of the headship of the church, the right to appoint their own spiritual leaders according to biblical qualifications, and the right to practice church discipline
    - The missionaries who gave up all for the gospel in the 19th century (e.g., Carey and Judson)

A Basic Sweep of Church History (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 1:14–19)

- Introduction
    - Church History "is generally agreed to divide the history of Christianity into three principal parts—ancient, medieval, and modern."[3]
    - For a brief (112 pages) and interesting overview, see *Church History 101: The Highlights of Twenty Centuries* by Ferguson, Beeke, and Haykin (Reformation Heritage Books, 2016).
- I. **Ancient Christianity**: from the birth of Christ to Gregory the Great. AD 1–590
    - Overview
        - Age of the Christian Fathers
        - The foundation, in doctrine, government, and worship, for all subsequent history

[3] Cf. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth: 1994), 6–8. Cunningham offers the very same breakdown; cf. Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* 2nd ed. (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1995), who offers eight ages: the Age of Jesus and the Apostles, the Age of Catholic Christianity, the Age of the Christian Roman Empire, the Christian Middle Ages, the Age of the Reformation, the Age of Reason and Revival, the Age of Progress, the Age of Ideologies.

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        - Constantine, the first "Christian" emperor, at the beginning of the fourth century marks a decisive turn; Christianity rising from a persecuted sect to the prevailing religion of the Greco-Roman period
    - Periods
        - **First Period (ca. AD 1–100):** The Life of Christ and the Apostolic church. From the Incarnation to the death of John.
        - **Second Period (AD 100–311):** Christianity under persecution in the Roman Empire. From the death of John to Constantine, the first "Christian" emperor.
        - **Third Period (AD 311–590)**: Christianity in union with the Greco-Roman period, and amid the storms of the great migration of nations. From Constantine the Great to Pope Gregory I.
- II. **Medieval Christianity**: from Gregory I to the Reformation. AD 590–1517
    - Overview
        - "Medieval Christianity is, on the one hand, a legitimate continuation and further development of ancient Catholicism; on the other hand, a preparation for Protestantism" (Schaff, *History*, 4:11).
        - Rise of monastic orders, spread of Islam and the Crusades
        - The Great Schism between East and West (1054)
        - In rise of absolute papacy beginning with Gregory the Great (590)
    - Periods
        - **Fourth Period (AD 590–1049):** Christianity planted among the Teutonic, Celtic, and Slavonic nations. From Gregory I to Gregory VII/Hildebrand.
        - **Fifth Period (AD 1049–1294):** The church under the papal hierarchy, and the scholastic theology. From Gregory VII to Boniface VIII.
        - **Sixth Period (AD 1294–1517):** The decay of medieval Catholicism, and the preparatory movements for the Reformation. From Boniface VIII to Luther.
- III. **Modern Christianity**: from the Reformation of the sixteenth century to the present time. AD 1517–present
    - Overview
        - Modern church history is the age of Protestantism in conflict with Romanism.
        - 16th century: The evangelical renovation of the church, and the papal counter-reform
        - 17th century: the period of scholastic orthodoxy, polemic confessionalism, and comparative stagnation. The reformatory motion ceases on the continent, but goes on in the mighty Puritanic struggle in England, and extends to the American colonies.
        - 18th century: the Pietistic and Methodistic revival of practical religion. The second half of the eighteenth century begins the vast overturning of traditional ideas and institutions. Deism in England, atheism in France, and rationalism in Germany represent the various degrees of the great modern apostasy from the orthodox creeds.

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- 19th century: the further development of these negative and destructive tendencies, *but* with it also the revival of Christian faith and church life.

- Periods
  - **Seventh Period (AD 1517–1648):** The evangelical Reformation, and the Roman Catholic Reaction. From Luther to the Treaty of Westphalia.
  - **Eighth Period (AD 1648–1790):** The age of polemic orthodoxy and exclusive confessionalism, with reactionary and progressive movements. From the Treaty of Westphalia to the French Revolution.
  - **Ninth Period (AD 1790–present):** The spread of infidelity, and the revival of Christianity in Europe and America, with missionary efforts encircling the globe. From the French Revolution to the present time.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 12: A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY
(by Matt Johnston)

The History of Ancient Christianity (1–590)

First Period: The life of Christ and the apostolic church (1–100)

- **General Introduction to the Period** (Schaff, *History*, 1:194–195)
  - The apostolic period extends from the Day of Pentecost to the death of St. John, and covers about seventy years, from AD 30 [or 33] to 100.[4]
  - The field of action is Palestine, and gradually extends over Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The most prominent centers are Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome.
  - As early as AD 58 Paul could say: "From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom 15:19).
- **Key Dates and Events**
  - **AD 30/33**: The church is founded on Pentecost, the first Lord's Day.
  - **AD 64**: A fire broke out and burned in Rome for six days and six nights. Rumors said that Nero started the fire himself. Ten of the fourteen sections of the city were destroyed.
    - Tacitus (AD 109): "But neither human help, nor imperial munificence, nor all the modes of placating Heaven, could stifle scandal or dispel the belief that the fire had taken place by order. Therefore, to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians … " (Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44).
  - **AD 70**: "Emperor Vespasian's forces, led by Titus, broke through the walls of Jerusalem, looted and burned the temple, and carried off the spoils to Rome [to build things like the Colosseum] … " (Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 23).
  - **AD 44–96**: The New Testament is written (James in AD 44 and Revelation between AD 94 and 96).
- **What Happened to the Apostles?**
  - Most of what we know is from non-authoritative tradition: "What became of Paul, Peter, and the other apostles? From an early date, traditions began to appear claiming that one or another of them had preached in a particular region, or had suffered martyrdom in one way or another. Most of these traditions are no more than the result of the desire of a church in a particular city to claim apostolic origin" (Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:27).
  - James the brother of John: Killed by King Herod Agrippa I in ca. AD 44 (Acts 12:1–2).
  - Paul: Many ancient writers agree that he also died in Rome at the time of Nero (ca. AD 64–68). As a Roman citizen, he would have been beheaded.

[4] Schaff, *History*, 1:217 gives May, AD 30 as a possible date: "This is on the assumption that Christ was born B.C. 4 or 5, and was crucified in April A.D. 30, at an age of thirty-three." Some are persuaded that Jesus began His ministry when He was thirty-three, and was crucified in AD 33 (Andreas J. Kostenberger and Justin Taylor, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014]; Colin J. Humphreys and W. G. Waddington, "The Jewish Calendar, A Lunar Eclipse and the Date of Christ's Crucifixion," *Tyndale Bulletin 43:2* (1992); Harold W. Hoehner, "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ Part V: The Year of Christ's Crucifixion," *Bibliotheca Sacra 131:524* (Oct 1974).

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- Thomas: "[F]rom a relatively early date there was a church in India, and … this church has repeatedly claimed Thomas as its founder" (ibid., 1:30).
- Peter: A trustworthy tradition tells us that he died in Rome under Nero's persecution. We are told he was crucified upside down (cf. John 21:18–19) (cf. Tertullian, *Prescriptions Against Heresies*, 33: "Rome … where Peter suffered like his Lord … ").

- **Peter the First Bishop of Rome?**
  - "The *Pope*, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, 'is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered'" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 882).
  - The validity of the Roman Catholic explanation of the papacy requires three premises (Schaff, *History*, 1:261–63):[5]
    - **(1) The presence of Peter in Rome**
      - History tells us Peter likely spent some time in Rome and was killed there[6]
      - Paul makes no mention of Peter in Romans
    - **(2) The transferability of Peter's preeminence on a successor**
      - Matthew 16:18 says nothing of succession (cf. Eph 2:20).
      - Peter's pioneering work can have no successor any more than Paul's in the conversion of the Gentiles.
    - **(3) The actual transfer of this prerogative of Peter upon the bishop of Rome**
      - Not upon the bishops of Jerusalem, or Antioch, where he undoubtedly resided, but upon the bishop of Rome, where he cannot be proven to have been from the New Testament.
      - "The first councils were held in Eastern cities and were composed almost altogether of Eastern bishops … . If any church had a special right to be called the Mistress of all the churches, it surely was the church in Jerusalem" (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 119).
      - The Apostolic Fathers speak of Peter, but make no mention of the above.
  - **Other factors that make Peter an unlikely candidate as Rome's first pope (ibid.):**
    - Peter was married (Matt 8:14; 1 Cor 9:5).

[5] Other helpful resources on the papacy include James White, *The Roman Catholic Controversy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 1996); 106ff.; Gregg R. Allison, *Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014); Leonardo De Chirico, *A Christian's Pocket Guide to the Papacy: Its Origin and Role in the 21st Century* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2015).

[6] Catholics have at times claimed Peter was Bishop of Rome from AD 42–67 (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 117; cf. Schaff, *History*, 1:251); *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that such claims are based on later sources and so cannot be affirmed with certainty (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11744a.htm).

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- James, not Peter presided over the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–11).
- Peter was openly rebuked for inconsistency (Gal 2:11–14).
- Peter writes to fellow elders (cf. 1 Pet 5:1–5).
- Earliest claim for the supremacy of the bishop of Rome was AD 441–442 (Sermons of Leo the Great on the 2nd and 3rd anniversary of his ordination to the papacy in Schaff, *NPNF*, Second Series, 12:279–84).

Second Period: Christianity Under Persecution in the Roman Empire (100–311)

- **Overview of the Period** (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 2:7–12).
  - "Despite widespread and determined efforts to eliminate the new faith, it survived and grew. By the reign of Constantine (312–337), the first 'Christian' emperor, there were churches in every large town in the empire" (Shelley, *Church History*, 28).
  - The theology of the second and third centuries was mainly *apologetic* against the paganism of Greece and Rome, and *polemic* against the various forms of the Gnostic heresy.
- **The Church Fathers in the Second and Third Centuries**
  - Basics of the Fathers
    - Generally the Fathers "lived between the end of the Apostolic Era (ca. 100) and the deaths of John Damascus (ca. 655/576–ca. 749) in the East and Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) in the West" (Haykin, *Church Fathers,* 16).
    - "It has become customary to delineate four main criteria to identify a 'father of the church': they must be ancient, orthodox in doctrine, holy in life, and approved by other Christians" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 19).
  - The Apostolic Fathers
    - "The term 'Apostolic Fathers' is traditionally used to designate the collection of the earliest extant Christian writings outside the New Testament. These documents are a primary resource for the study of early Christianity, especially the postapostolic period (ca. A.D. 70–150). They provide significant and often unparalleled glimpses of insights into the life of Christians and the Christian movement during a critical transitional stage in its history" (Holmes, "Introduction," *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3).
    - Lightfoot's translation is freely available: www.ccel.org/ccel/lightfoot/fathers.html.
    - **Clement of Rome**
      - 1 Clement, written by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians some time during the last two decades of the first century.
      - 2 Clement, although long associated with Clement of Rome, doesn't seem to have been composed by him. It is "the oldest surviving complete Christian sermon outside of the New Testament" (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 132).
    - **Ignatius of Antioch**

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- Ignatius' seven letters are addressed to various churches in Asia Minor.
- He composes his letters on the way to his eventual martyrdom in Rome.
- His letters had three focal points (adapted from ibid., 167):
    - (1) The struggle against false teachers within the church, with a focus on Judaizing legalism and Gnosticism.
    - (2) The unity of the churches.
        - Ignatius also argues for commitment to the bishop, but does so in a way quite different from his contemporary, Clement of Rome (ibid., 168). He explains, "I do not give orders like Peter and Paul: they were apostles…" (Ignatius, *Romans,* 4.3).
    - (3) His own death. He is explicit that he doesn't want the recipients of his letters to try and stop his execution.
- Theologically significant excerpts from Ignatius
    - Lord's Day: Speaks of "no longer keeping the Sabbath but living in accordance with the Lord's day" (Ignatius, *Magnesians*, 9.1).
    - Soteriology: "Jesus Christ, who died for us in order that by believing in his death you might escape death" (Ignatius, *Trallians*, 2.1); "… only let us be found in Christ Jesus, which leads to true life" (Ignatius, *Ephesians* 11.1).
    - Christology: "There is only one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Eph. 7.2; cf. 18.2, 20.2); "Heartiest greetings blamelessly in Jesus Christ our God" (Ignatius, *Romans*, Salutation).

- **The Martyrdom of Polycarp**
    - The oldest written account of Christian martyrdom outside the New Testament. "Apparently written by eyewitnesses (15.1) not long after the event (18.1), it records in sometimes gruesome detail, the pursuit, arrest, trial, and execution of Polycarp, the beloved eighty-six-year-old bishop of the church of Smyrna" (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 298).
    - He was likely martyred between AD 155 and 160 (ibid., 301).
    - "But when the magistrate persisted and said, 'Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile Christ,' Polycarp replied, 'For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 9.3).
- **The Epistle to Diognetus**
    - Likely written between 150–225.
    - See Chapter 5 of the epistle for a fascinating description of Christians.

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- **Select Post-Apostolic Fathers**
  - **Justin Martyr the Apologist (100–165)**
    - "He found connection points between the church's proclamation and the thought-world into which he was taking the gospel. Yet he did so without compromising the faith like the many heretical sects" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 55).
    - Major works: *First Apology, Second Apology* and his *Dialogue with Trypho.*
    - Taught that the true duty of philosophy was to investigate deity (cf. *Dialogue with Trypho,* ANF 1:194).
    - Trypho was a Jew and in this work he spent a great deal of time explaining Old Testament prophecies and defending the deity of Christ.
    - Justin's appeal to Typho toward the end of their dialogue: "I exhort you to give all diligence in this very great struggle for your own salvation, and to be earnest in setting a higher value on the Christ of the Almighty God than your own teachers" (ibid., 1:270).
  - **Tertullian (160–225)**
    - "Tertullian was born … the son of a Roman Centurion. As an adult he practiced law at Rome until he converted to Christianity from paganism. He became a presbyter in the church at Carthage (near modern-day Tunis in Tunisia), serving there until he broke away from the catholics [not in the Roman Catholic sense] as he became increasingly attracted to a sect of [so called] Spirit-filled prophets called the Montanists" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 103).
    - Father of Latin theology.
    - Wrote: *Prescription Against Heretics* and *Against Marcion*.
    - He famously noted "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?" (*Prescription Against Heretics* 7, ANF 3:246), revealing a bit of his perspective on philosophy and "the blood of Christians is seed" (*semen est sanguis Christianorum;* Apology 50, ANF 3:55), celebrating martyrdom.
  - **Irenaeus of Lyons (130–200)**
    - Helped identify the canon of Scripture, and was the first to use the term "New Testament" in the way we use it today.
    - "He grew up in Smyrna, where Bishop of Polycarp presided over the church … . Through Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John, the boy Irenaeus felt that he was experiencing a living connection with the apostolic age" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 79).

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- His most famous work: *The Detection and Overthrow of What Is Falsely Called 'Knowledge'* (*Against Heresies*; 5 volumes) (ibid., 84).

- **Origen (185–254)**
  - Was born and lived much of his life in Alexandria. His father was martyred when he was 17. He later moved to Caesarea in Palestine.
  - "Origen longed for mystical union with God through Jesus Christ. He interpreted the Bible allegorically to find Christ on every page" (ibid., 143).
    - "Identified three (or sometimes four) 'senses' of scripture." (ibid., 150). He used 2 Corinthians 3:6 to contrast literal and spiritual.
    - He didn't deny a literal meaning, but viewed that as the most simple or elementary interpretation.
    - "The Millenarianism of the early church was gradually overcome … . The allegorical interpretation of Scripture, introduced by the Alexandrian school, and sponsored especially by Origen, also had a chilling effect on all millennial hopes" (Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 262).
    - Some think he was protected from excessive allegory because he embraced the Rule of Faith (cf. Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 152).
  - Was an ascetic who took Matthew 19:12 literally and became "a eunuch for the kingdom of God."
  - He was brutally tortured (burned and limbs were stretched) under the Emperor Decius and died from the wounds he received.

- **Heresies in the Second and Third Centuries**
  - **Gnosticism**
    - Pre/early Gnosticism in the New Testament: Colossians and 1 John.
    - The term Gnosticism comes from the Greek word for knowledge, *gnōsis*. Gnostics were those who thought they had been initiated into a higher level of knowledge.
    - "The gnostics understood themselves to be the elite 'chosen people' who, in distinction from the 'worldly-minded,' were able to perceive the delicate connection between world (cosmology), humanity (anthropology), and salvation (soteriology). The goal of gnostic teaching was that with the help of insight (*gnosis*), the elect could be freed from the fetters of this world (spirit from matter, light from darkness) and so return to their true home in the Kingdom of Light—for that alone is the meaning of 'salvation'" (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:1033–1034).
  - **Marcion**
    - "Polycarp once ran into Marcion at Rome but completely ignored him. Apparently Marcion was feeling a little insecure about his reputation that day, for he demanded of the bishop, 'Acknowledge me!' 'I do acknowledge you,' replied Polycarp. 'You are the

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firstborn of Satan!' This was probably not the reply Marcion was looking for" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 106; found in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* 3.4.4, ANF, I:416).

- Taught that the Old Testament god was different from the New Testament god, and that Docetism, the heresy that Christ merely appeared or seemed to be a man, though He truly was not.
- Rejected the Old Testament in its entirety, and any other portion of Scripture that seemed to him to be Jewish. He was left with most of Paul and Luke's gospel.

- **Montanus**
  - Came on the scene around 156 and 172.
  - Self-proclaimed prophet who spoke much about Christ's second coming.
  - "Montanists insisted that opposition to the new prophecy was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (Shelley, *Church History*, 65).
  - Movement was too fanatical and too heavily ascetic to gain any traction.

- **The Beginnings of a Shift in Church Government**
  - In the New Testament there were two church offices: Elder and deacon.
    - The terms for elder (*presbúteros*), overseer (*epískopos*), and pastor (*poimēn*; cf. the verb *poimaínō*) are all connected (Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet 5:1–2; Acts 20:17, 28).
    - The words for "overseer" and "elder" continued to be used interchangeably into the third century (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 590).
  - Allusions to the two-tiered system in the *Didache* and Polycarp:
    - *Didache*, 15: "Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops (i.e., "overseers"; *epískopous*) and deacons (*diákonous*) worthy of the Lord."
    - Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians,* 5, 6: "Deacons must be blameless … . The presbyters, for their part, must be compassionate … ."
  - "Faced with a dangerous heresy and confronted with potential divisions in the churches, Ignatius responded with a new form of church government" (Allison, *Historical Theology,* 590).
    - This shift resulted in a new structure: Bishop/Overseer (one) / Elders (plurality) / Deacons (plurality).
    - "While Ignatius's ideal church may have threefold ministry that includes deacons and presbyters, it is the bishop who is constitutive of the church: where he is, the church is … . [He argues] for the authority and place of the bishop and does not base it … upon the concept of apostolic succession [contra 1 Clement]" (Holmes, 168).
    - "You must all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the council of presbyters as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God … ." (Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans*, 8.1; cf. *Philadelphians,* 4).
  - "As the church developed in the third and fourth centuries, the threefold structure introduced by Ignatius became the standard government" (Allison, *Historical Theology,* 592; cf. Cunningham*, Historical Theology*, 250).

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- Cyprian (d. 258), bishop of Carthage, continued the development of the three-tiered system as he dealt with Novatian and his followers who separated from the church: "There is one church, divided by Christ throughout the whole world into many members, and also one episcopate diffused through a harmonious multitude of many bishops" (Cyprian, *Letter* 51.24, in *ANF*, 5:33).

Third Period: Christianity in union with the Greco-Roman period, and amid the storms of the great migration of nations (AD 311–590)

- **Overview of the Period** (adapted from Schaff, *History* 3:4–10)
  - The reign of Constantine the Great marks the transition of the Christian religion under persecution by the secular government to the beginning of the state-church system.
  - The Christian life of the Nicene and post-Nicene age reveals a mass of worldliness within the church; an entire abatement of chiliasm with its longing after the return of Christ and His glorious reign, and in its stead an easy repose in the present order of things.
  - Monasticism, sought to save the purity of the church and the glory of martyrdom by retreat from the world into the wilderness. The movement often pushed the limits of fanaticism.
  - The Greek church (esp. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzus) produced the creeds that defined the orthodox view of the holy Trinity and the person of Christ, while the Latin church made considerable advances with the anthropological and soteriological doctrines of sin and grace (mainly Augustine).
- **Constantine the Great (d. 337)**
  - Before Constantine there was massive persecution under Diocletian.
  - After his conquest of Rome, Constantine met with Lucinius (another ruler), at Milan and made an alliance and agreed upon the Edict of Milan in 313. "Part of what was agreed there was that the persecution of Christians would stop, and that their churches, cemeteries, and other properties would be returned to them" (Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:107).
  - "Christianity appeared to him, as it proved in fact, the only efficient power for a political reformation of the empire, from which the ancient spirit of Rome was fast departing, while internal, civil, and religious dissensions and the outward pressure of the barbarians threatened a gradual dissolution of society" (Schaff, *History,* 3:14; cf. Gonzáles, *Story,* 1:118).
  - Constantine's Christianity (Schaff, *History,* 3:37):
    - As late as 321 he was regularly consulting heathen soothsayers.
    - Until the end of his life he kept the title *Pontifex Maximus*, which declared him high-priest of the heathen hierarchy.
    - He was baptized a few days before his death at 65 years of age.
  - The Impact of Constantine (adapted from Gonzáles, *Story,* 1:124).
    - With the end of persecution, there was worldliness in the church, and in response monastics attempted to show true devotion by separating from society.

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- Mingling of church history and the history of the Roman Empire
- "Incense … a sign of respect for the emperor, began appearing in Christian churches"
- Elaborate churches and basilicas in contrast to the previous simple worship.
- There was a shift in the common view on eschatology:
    - "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age (100–325) is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism [from the Latin: *mille anni*] … . It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius; while Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius (as afterwards Jerome and Augustine) opposed it" (Schaff, *History,* 2:614.).
    - Although some were against *chiliasm* before Constantine (e.g., Origen), "the crushing blow came from the great change in the social condition and prospects of the church in the Nicene age. After Christianity, contrary to all expectation, triumphed in the Roman Empire, and was embraced by the Caesars themselves, the millennial reign, instead of being anxiously waited and prayed for, began to be dated either from the first appearance of Christ, or from the conversion of Constantine and the downfall of paganism, and to be regarded to be realized in the glory of the dominant imperial state-church" (ibid, 2:619).

- **Monasticism**
    - Monasticism is connected with the Greek word *mónos*, which can mean "one" or "alone."
    - "When Constantine came to power, the life which these hermits had led became increasingly popular. Some travelers who visited the region declared, with obvious exaggeration, that the desert was more populated than some cities … . No matter how exaggerated these figures may be, the fact to which they point is certain: those who fled society for the withdrawn life of the hermit were legion" (ibid., 142).
    - Simeon Stylites is an example of the excesses of monasticism. Simeon was an ascetic monk, who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries AD. His name comes from the Greek word *stulos*, which means "pillar." He spent much of his life, some say as many as thirty-seven years, atop a pillar.
- **The First "Real" Roman Catholic Pope**
    - The word "pope" simply means "father."
        - In the early times it was used to refer to any important or respected bishop (Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:242, "There are documents referring to 'Pope Cyprian' of Carthage, or to 'Pope Athanasius' of Alexandria").
    - Eusebius (270–340) in his *Ecclesiastical History* [note the mention of Paul]:

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- "After the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Linus was the first appointed bishopric of the church of Rome" (III.ii).
- "Linus … has already been declared to have been the first after Peter to be appointed to the bishopric of the Church in Rome" (III.iv).
- "At this time Clement was still governing the Romans and he, also, occupied the third place in the list of bishops in Rome after Paul and Peter; Linus was the first and after him Anencletus" (III.xx).

- Innocent I (402–417): "Took a step beyond, and in the Pelagian controversy ventured the bold assertion, that in the whole Christian world nothing should be decided without the cognizance of the Roman see, and that, especially in matters of faith, all bishops must turn to St. Peter" (Schaff, *History*, 3:315).
- Leo the Great (440–461)
  - The first pope in the truest sense is Leo I. "In him the idea of the papacy, as it were, became flesh and blood" (ibid.).
  - Leo certainly wielded political power in Rome. In 452 when Attila and his Huns invaded Italy, it was Leo who went to meet him. Likewise in 455 when the Vandals sacked the city, it was Leo who led the negotiations with the Vandal leader to save the city from burning (Shelley, *Church History*, 133).
  - However, in theological controversy Leo's opinion was not accepted simply because he was the bishop of Rome. Although the bishops at the Council of Chalcedon in many ways honored Leo as the bishop of Rome, they gave the bishop of Constantinople (which was the New Rome in Constantine's empire) equal authority with that of Leo (ibid., 138).
- The period between Gregory and Leo: "The first Leo and the first Gregory are the two greatest bishops of Rome in the first six centuries. Between them no important personage appears on the chair of Peter … . Leo thought and acted as an absolute monarch; Gregory as first among the patriarchs; but both under the full conviction that they were successors of Peter" (Schaff, *History*, 323).
- Gregory the Great (590)
  - Gregory's own words on the Papacy: "Now I confidently say that whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist, because he proudly puts himself above all others" (*A letter to Maricius Augustus*," Book 7, Epistle 33, in Schaff, *Post-Nicene Fathers*, 12: 224–225).
  - "While Gregory protested high sounding titles, he claimed and exercised, as far as he had the opportunity and power, the oversight over the whole church of Christ" (Shelley, *Church History*, 167).

- **Select Fathers in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries**
  - **Athanasius (296–373)**

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- At the age of twenty-three wrote against the views of Arius, declaring them to be heresy
- Became Bishop of Alexandria on June 8, AD 328 (He was thirty).
- Was exiled five times (seventeen of his forty-five years as bishop were spent in exile).
- *On the Incarnation* was his most famous work.

- **John Chrysostom (347–407)**
  - His name means "golden mouth."
  - Studied under the Libanius, who was the most outstanding orator of his day. "When [Libanus was] asked which of his students should succeed him in his professorship of rhetoric, Libanius replied, 'It ought to have been John, had not the Christians stole him from us" (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 191).
  - "When John interpreted the Bible, he used a very different method than what we have already seen in Origen. Origen's "Alexandrian" method of allegorization had a long history among the ancient Greeks, who used it to reinterpret their embarrassing mythology to find a more profound meaning. In the early church, Origen applied some of the same principles to the text of scripture … . A school of thought arose in opposition to the allegorical exegesis, and this school was centered in the Syrian city of Antioch. Therefore, modern scholars of early Christianity make a distinction between the 'Alexandrian' and Antiochene' approaches to biblical interpretation" (ibid., 198).
- **Augustine (354–430)**
  - Father of orthodox theology and most important pre-Reformation theologian.
  - Council of Carthage (419) decided for Augustine's views on grace and sin and condemned Pelagianism (see below).
  - He adopted amillennialism with the help of Ambrose's allegorical method.
  - Highlights from Augustine's *Confessions* (as translated by Chadwick):
    - "You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (I.i).
    - His reflection on stealing pears as a child: "I had no motive for my wickedness except wickedness itself. I was foul, and I loved it." (II.iv).
    - Unhelpful, confusing sections: Seem to allude to praying for his mother's sins after her death (IX.35). Baptismal regeneration? (IX.iii, iv, vi).
    - His conversion (see VIII.xii).
    - "Grant what you command, and command what you will" (X, xxix, xxx).
      - "Pelagius was a British monk…He came to Rome in 400 and was distressed at the state of conduct there. Feeling that there was need of more moral conduct he was shocked at the prayer of Augustine (above)" (Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 73).

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- "Pelagius, and his immediate followers, Coelestius and Julian, taught openly and explicitly that man's moral character had received no injury from the fall, and that men were born now with much ability to do the will of God, and to discharge all the obligations incumbent upon them, as Adam" (Cunningham, *Historical Theology,* 1:329).

- **Patrick (d. 493?)**
  - Patrick was born in Great Britain to godly parents, but was captured and made a slave in Ireland for six years. It was as a captive in Ireland that the Lord saved Him.
  - He escaped back to Britain, but a vision from God led him to return to Ireland.
  - Assessments of Patrick's Christianity:
    - "The Christianity of Patrick was substantially that of Gaul and old Britain, i.e. Catholic, orthodox, monastic, ascetic, but independent of the Pope, and differing from Rome in the age of Gregory I in minor matters of polity and ritual. In his Confession he never mentions Rome or the Pope; he never appeals to tradition, and seems to recognize the Scriptures (including the Apocrypha) as the only authority in matters of faith." (Schaff, *History*, 4:47).[7]
    - "Evangelical faith even then existed in the British islands in the person of this slave, and of some few Christians born again, like him from on high" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, 5:679.)
  - The Confession of St. Patrick:[8]
    - "I, Patrick, a sinner, a most simple countryman … . I did not, indeed, know the true God; and I was taken into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of people, according to our deserts, for quite drawn away from God, we did not keep his precepts, nor were we obedient to our priests who used to remind us of our salvation" (1; cf. 15: "I was not worthy").
    - "And there [Ireland] the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who had regard for my insignificance and pitied my youth and ignorance" (2; Before his conversion he says he "remained in death and unbelief" 27).
    - "Before I was humbled I was like a stone lying in deep mire, and he that is mighty came and in his mercy raised me up and, indeed, lifted me high up and placed me on top of the wall. And from there I ought to shout out in

[7] Schaff will go on to say that he quotes form the canonical Scriptures twenty-five times, but others scholars observe many more citations and allusions.

[8] Available online in English: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/patrick/confession.i.html and Latin, with manuscript annotations: http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/L201060/.

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gratitude to the Lord for his great favours in this world and forever, that the mind of man cannot measure" (12).

- He once explained to his captors: "Be converted by faith with all your heart to my Lord, because nothing is impossible for him" (19).
- He speaks of Christ as, "He who gave his life for you" (24; cf. also section 55 for statements on Christ's substitution).

- **The Recognition of the New Testament Canon in the Early Church**
  - "A book is not the Word of God because it is accepted by the people of God. Rather, it was accepted by the people of God because it is the Word of God. That is, God gives the book its divine authority, not the people" (Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction to the Bible*, 210).
  - "The writings that composed the Jewish Scriptures—now called the Old Testament—were fixed and had been so for several centuries prior to the coming of Jesus Christ" (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 37).[9]
    - "It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes [464–423 BC] very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time" (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.41 in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 37).
  - "Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord" (Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians,* 6.3).
  - "We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us … [he then lists several of the New Testament books]. If anyone does not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics" (Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, 3.1.1, 2).
    - Irenaeus also speaks of "tradition which originates from the apostles" (3.2.2; 3.3.2).
    - "Throughout this treatise Irenaeus is content to use and cite a wide variety of New Testament books as Scripture and presumes his audience is familiar with them. He appeals to these books quite naturally and unapologetically, cites them by name, and provides no indication that this audience might be unaware of their existence or surprised by their authoritative role in the life of the church" (Michael Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 159).
  - "Two key criteria emerged to determine which writings to include in the canon:

[9] The Catholic Church, in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, 4th session (April 8, 1546), declared that the Apocrypha was a part of the Scripture in following the Vulgate and that anyone who didn't agree was anathema. Interestingly, Jerome (translator of the Vulgate), identified the Apocryphal books as different from the true canon, and ended up including them in his translation at the encouragement of Augustine (cf. Allison, *Historical Theology*, 13).

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- **(1)** *apostolicity*: Does this writing have an apostle for its author (e.g., Paul's letters, the gospels of Matthew and John)? If not, is an apostle associated with this writing (e.g., Mark's gospel records the account of the apostle Peter)? (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.1.1, ANF, I:414, "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter").
- **(2)** *antiquity*: Has the church historically recognized the voice of God speaking to His people in this writing?" (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 42).

- The Muratorian Fragment (AD 170), named for the man who found the document.
  - Added to the twenty-seven books of our canon: Wisdom of Solomon, Revelation of Peter
  - Missing: Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 3 John
  - "We should not use lack of *agreement* over the edges of canon as evidence for the lack of *existence* of a canon" (Kruger, *Canon*, 163).
- Theophilus of Antioch
  - Wrote his only surviving work *to Autolycus* around AD 177 (ibid., 164).
  - "Theophilus places the 'Gospels' on the same level of inspiration and authority as the Old Testament Prophets" and was clearly aware of Paul's writings (ibid.).
  - "In the final analysis, the core of Theophilus' collection of scriptural books is basically the same as that of Irenaeus; it included the four Gospels, the Pauline letters, and likely a few other books" (ibid.).
- Origen (mid-third century)
  - Identical to our present canon, but several books were disputed (e.g., Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John).
- Eusebius of Caesarea (*Ecclesiastical History*, III.iii).
  - Accepted books: four gospels, Acts, thirteen letters of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, Revelation (may be spurious)
  - Disputed, yet known to most: James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude
  - He also had two other categories, 'Spurious works,' and 'Absurd works,' each with several works on the list.
- Athanasius' Easter letter (AD 367):
  - Lists all twenty-seven books of the New Testament
  - "These are fountains of salvation … . Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these … (Athanasius, "Selected Works, Letters," *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 4, 551–52). Athanasius' list was officially endorsed at the Council of Hippo in AD 393).

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- **Justification by Faith Alone in the Early Church**[10]
  - Origen (185–254): "A man is justified by faith. The works of the law can make no contribution to this. Where there is no faith which might justify the believer, even if there are works of the law these are not based on the foundation of faith. Even if they are good in themselves they cannot justify the one who does them, because faith is lacking, and faith is the mark of those who are justified by God" (Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, 2.136).
  - Basil of Caesarea (329–379): "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord, that Christ has been made by God for us righteousness, wisdom, justification, redemption. This is perfect and pure boasting in God, when one is not proud on account of his own righteousness but knows that he is indeed unworthy of the true righteousness and is justified solely by faith in Christ" (Basil, "Homily on Humility," 20.3).
  - Jerome (347–420): "We are saved by grace rather than works, for we can give God nothing in return for what he has bestowed on us" (Jerome, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1.2.1).
  - John Chrysostom (349–407): "God allowed his Son to suffer as if a condemned sinner, so that we might be delivered from the penalty of our sins. This is God's righteousness, that we are not justified by works (for then they would have to be perfect, which is impossible), but by grace, in which case all our sin is removed" (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, 11.5).
- **The Trinity and the Person of Christ in the Ancient Church**[11]
  - "After the completion of the NT, Christian writers saw it as their task to defend and explain how Jesus is one with God, while maintaining there is only one God" (Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 89).
  - **Irenaeus (130–200)** "stresses the oneness of God. The Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, are fully God, but yet in no way detract from the divine unity" (ibid., 96).
  - **Subordinationism**: Christ and the Spirit are lesser beings and subordinate to God.
  - **Modalism**: The Son and the Spirit are temporary manifestations of the one God
    - "Modalism was suppressed by the council of Antioch in 268, but the subordinationist question was still unresolved" (ibid., 109).
  - **Tertullian (160–225)** was "[t]he first to use *Trinitas* and *persona* … [and] by demonstrating the real personal distinctions in the Trinity, he sets up a barrier to modalism" (ibid., 100–101).
  - **Origen (185–254)** is at times accused of being a subordinationist, however, he taught, contra Arius that, "There was not when he was not" of the Son (ibid., 105).

[10] Adapted from Nathan Busenitz, "The Gospel According to the Church Fathers," *The Cripplegate*, accessed March 25, 2013: http://thecripplegate.com/reprise-the-gospel-according-to-the-church-fathers/. Cf. also his seminar "Do We Have the Same Gospel as the Early Church?": http://media.shepherdsfellowship.org/2012/Seminar%20Session%20IV/2028.mp3.

[11] Cf. Busentiz, "*Did Constantine Invent the Trinity?* Why Rob Bell, The Da Vinci Code, and the Jehovah's Witnesses Are Wrong" http://media.shepherdsfellowship.org/2013/Seminar%20Session%20III/2019.mp3.

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- **Sabellianism (3rd century)**: "The only God, the Father in the OT, had become the Son in the NT, and sanctified the church as the Holy Spirit after Pentecost" (ibid., 108).
- **Arius (ca. 250–ca. 336):** "There was [a time] when the Son was not[*én pote hóte ouk ēn*]."
  - Arius was a propagandist and used songs to promote his heresy.
  - "The text John 10:30, where Jesus says 'I and the Father are one,' was taken to mean a unity in harmonious agreement of will, not identity of essence. Thus, for Arius, will is primary rather than essence" (ibid., 112).
- **First Council of Nicaea (325)**
  - Arius was condemned, his books were burned and he was exiled.
  - "Nicaea's main achievement was to place on record once and for all that the being of the Son is identical to the being of the Father, dealing a mortal blow to subordinationism" (ibid., 117).
  - The Nicene Creed as it is known today is actually from Constantinople (381):
    One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father [*ek tēs ousías tou patrós*].[12]
  - of the same essence (consubstantial with) of the Father [*homoousion tō patri*]
- Arianism and semi-Arianism gained ascendency for a time in the church (AD 325–361)
- **Athanasius (296–373):** Taught that God is one being (ousia) and three persons (hypostasis) and the mutual indwelling of the three Persons.
- **The Cappadocians**: Basil the Great (330–379); Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335/340–394/400); Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 330–391):
  - "[Clarified] the real, eternal, personal distinctions of the three and setting these in the context of their relations to each other. God is one undivided being, yet three persons in communion and union" (ibid., 165–164).
  - Nazianzus taught: Ingenerateness [Father]; Generateness [Son]; Procession [Spirit]
- **The First Council of Constantinople (381)[13]**
  - Added important statements emphasizing the deity of the Holy Spirit
  - "Thus Arianism and the kindred errors were forever destroyed in the Roman Empire, though kindred opinions continually reappear in other cases" (Schaff, *History,* 3:640).
- **The Council of Ephesus (431):** Condemned Nestorianism (Christ had two Persons)
- **The Council of Chalcedon (451)**: Carefully defined orthodox Christology[14]
  - **"Reasonable soul"**—"Against Apollinaris, who denied that Christ had a ψυχὴ λογικήν [*psuchè logikē*, reasonable soul] , and who reduced the Incarnation to the

[12] For a discussion on the development of terminology to describe the Trinity from Nicaea in 325 to Constantinople in 381 see Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 115–122.

[13] http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.iv.i.ii.ii.html.

[14] The Definition of Chalcedon: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.iv.i.iii.html.

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assumption of a human body (σῶμα) [*sōma*] with an animal soul (ψυχὴ ἄλογος) [*psuchē álogos*], inhabited by the Divine Logos. But the rational spirit of man requires salvation as much as the body" (Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom,* 2:62; Cf. Reymond, *Systematic Theology*, 602).

- **"One Substance"**—"Christ's homoousia with the Father implies numerical unity, or identity of essence (God being one in being, or *monoousios*); Christ's homoousia with men means only generic unity, or equality of nature" (Schaff, *Creeds*, 2:62).
- **"Two natures"**—Against Monophysitism and Eutychianism, which taught that Christ only had one nature

- **The Second Council of Constantinople (533)**: Monophysites made a partial victory … even though their doctrine was still expected to be understood in light of Chalcedon.
- **The Third Council of Constantinople (680):** Condemned Monothelitism (one will in Christ) as well as Pope Honorius I, who was a monothelite heretic (cf. Schaff, *History*, 4:491).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 12: A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY
(by Matt Johnston)

The History of Medieval Christianity (590–1517)

- **General Introduction to Medieval Christianity** (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 4:5–14)
  - The theater of mediaeval Christianity is mainly Europe. In Western Asia and North Africa, the Cross was supplanted by the Crescent; and America only discovered in 1492.
  - Industrious priests and monks saved the treasures of classical literature, together with the Holy Scriptures and patristic writings from the wreck of the Roman Empire.
  - The church as a visible organization never had greater power over the minds of men. She controlled all departments of life from the cradle to the grave.
  - "This is what makes the riddle of the medieval age; that it was not one age but two ages. We look into the moods of some men, and it might be the Stone Age; and we look into the minds of other men, and they might be living in the Golden Age; in the most modern sort of Utopia" (G. K. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 42).
- **The Place of the Middle Ages in Church History**
  - The Reformers did not reject all medieval theology. Luther and Calvin's disparagement of scholastic theology can be partially attributed to their rejection of one particular type.
  - "Medieval Christianity is, on the one hand, a legitimate continuation and further development of ancient Catholicism; on the other hand a preparation for Protestantism" (Schaff, *History*, 4:11).
  - There was continuity: Trinity; Predestination; Anselm's ideas on the atonement set the stage for the Reformers ideas on the atonement.
  - There was discontinuity:
    - Ancient Church: *how* did God become man?
    - Middle Ages: *why* did God become man?
  - The rediscovery of Aristotle in the 12th century transformed the intellectual culture in Europe (Trueman, lecture 1, "Medieval Church: Introduction").[15]
  - Big issue of the day was determining how to relate to the early Church Fathers and their theology (Trueman, lecture 2, "The Church Fathers and Translation").
- **The Papacy in the Middle Ages**
  - Pseudo-Isodorian Decretals (Pro-papacy document forged in the 9th century)
    - "The most colossal and effective fraud known in the history of ecclesiastical literature" (Schaff, *History*, 4:268).
    - "Both [Pope] Nicolas I (858–867) and the rest of Europe believed that the *Decretals* were genuine" (Gonzáles, *Story,* 1:274).

[15] These lectures were delivered at Westminster Theological Seminary and are freely available online: https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/medievalchurch/id430337027.

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- Described the whole hierarchy of the Roman church as something that was intact from the beginning, rather than something that developed over time (Schaff, *History*, 4:273).
- "The clergy is a divinely instituted, consecrated, and inviolable caste, mediating between God and the people … . The priests are the '*familiares Dei*,' the '*spirituales*,' the laity the '*carnales*.' He who sins against them sins against God … . The *cathedra Petri* is the fountain of all power" (Schaff, *History*, 4:269).

- Popes often wielded their power over secular rulers, but at the same time, Popes were often chosen and controlled by rich nobles.
- On Christmas Day, 799 Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great (Charlemagne), king of the Franks, holy Roman Emperor.
- Describing the papacy after the reign of John VIII (872–882) Gonzáles explains, "Popes were strangled, or died of starvation in the dungeons where they had been thrown by their successors. At times there were two popes, or even three, each claiming to be the true successor of Saint Peter" (Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:275).
- Benedict IX was made pope in 1033 (at the age of 12), he was driven out of Rome in 1045, and Italian nobles made Sylvester III pope. But, Benedict returned and began to rule again as Pope. However, after a time he sold the papal office for one thousand pounds of silver to Gregory VI. In the end Benedict refused to surrender and there were three so-called popes (ibid., 267).
- Urban VI (crowned 1378) in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon, France (this started the Papal schism that lasted for thirty-nine years; cf. Shelley, *Church History*, 221).
- Hildebrand, Gregory VII (elected Pope 1073) had a clash with Emperor Henry IV. Both men attempted to do away with each other. The result was Henry doing public penance for three days in the snow.[16]
- In 1208 Pope Innocent III excommunicated King John of England from the church, which meant his subjects were no longer required to obey him as king. Eventually, therefore, he humbly submitted to the Pope.

- **All Dark and No Light?**
  - We would be foolish to imagine that between the Fathers and the Reformers there was a gap of roughly 1,000 years without any representatives of Christian orthodoxy.
  - "There are very considerable difficulties in ascertaining accurately the doctrinal views of some of these alleged witnesses for the truth during the middle ages, as in most cases we have scarcely any means of knowing what they believed and taught, except from Popish writers, their enemies and persecutors; and we may be pretty confident that the men who murdered them would not scruple to calumniate them [make knowingly or maliciously false statements about them]" (Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:451).

[16] Hildebrand also tried to reform the papacy (cf. Schaff, *History*, 5:9ff).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 12: A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY
(by Matt Johnston)

Fourth Period: From Gregory I to Hildebrand, or Gregory VII (AD 590–1049)

- **General Introduction to the Period**
  - Medieval "missions"—"The medieval Christianization was a conversion of nations under the command of their leaders … . It was a conversion not to the primary Christianity of inspired apostles, as laid down in the New Testament, but to the secondary Christianity of ecclesiastical tradition as taught by the fathers, monks and pope" (Schaff, *History*, 4:18).
  - Muhammed and Islamic expansion
  - Doctrinal Controversies: Procession of the Holy Spirit; Monotheletism and Adoptionism; the Eucharist; Predestination Controversy
  - The Second Council of Nicaea (AD 787) sanctioned a limited worship of images.[17]
- **Mohammed (570–632)**
  - For a brief overview of Mohammed's life, see chapter 1 in James White, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Qur'an* (Bethany House, 2013).
  - "Mohammed claimed that he was not preaching a new religion, but simply the culmination of what God had revealed in the Hebrew prophets and in Jesus, who was a great prophet, although not divine as Christians claimed" (Gonzáles, *Story,* 1:249).
  - In AD 622 Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, where he founded the first Islamic community, which followed his guidelines in every sphere of life.
  - "By his death in 632, a goodly part of Arabia was in Moslem hands" (ibid.).
  - Over the next 100 years (until 732) the Islamic expansion took Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa. The Church in these regions was severely hurt or totally destroyed.
- **Gottschalk (804–868/9)**
  - Taught limited atonement (Schaff, *History*, 4:528)
  - Taught a strong version of double predestination based on his understanding of divine immutability, which he considered a legitimate development from Augustine[18]
  - A vigorous evangelist
  - The church always held Augustine in high esteem, but they never really bought into his teaching on sin, grace, and predestination.
  - An assessment of his teaching on predestination:
    - "He held a two-fold predestination of the elect to salvation, and of the reprobate to perdition; not in the sense of two separate predestinations, but one predestination with two sides (*gemina*, i.e. *bipartita*), a positive side (election) and a negative side

[17] "Occupies the lowest grade among the seven ecumenical synods" (Schaff, *History*, 4:462).

[18] Augustine says this about God's election, rooting the predestination to righteousness in nothing man does, but the predestination to perdition in man's works: "Therefore the election obtained what it obtained gratuitously; there preceded none of those things which they might first give, and it should be given to them again. He saved them for nothing. But to the rest who were blinded, as is there plainly declared, it was done in recompense" (Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 5:504).

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(reprobation). He could not conceive of the one without the other; but he did not teach a predestination of the sinner to sin, which would make God the author of sin" (Schaff, *History,* 4:531).

- "He spoke of two redemptions, one common to the elect and the reprobate, another proper and special for the elect only" (ibid., 4:531–532).
- Berkhof sees Gottshalk as returning to a more careful and consistent Augustinian view of predestination. This is in contrast to Gregory the Great's modified Augustinianism, which roots predestination in divine foreknowledge (Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines,* 141–142).

- His shorter confession is available online.[19]
- Rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation along with Ratramnus.

- **Ratramnus (9th century)**
  - A monk who defended Gottschalk's view of predestination in his work on predestination (*De praedestinatione Dei*).
  - Argued against Radbertus' view of transubstantiation (*De corpore et sanguine Domini*), following Augustine. Eventually the transubstantiation view, relying heavily upon Ambrose, won the day.
    - "Ratramnus addressed the key question: 'whether that very body which was born of Mary, suffered, died, and was buried, and which sits at the right hand of the Father is daily eaten in the church by the mouth of the faithful through the mystery of the sacraments.' Ratramnus replied that 'they are not the same.' Rather, there is a 'a great difference between' the historical body of Christ—'the real flesh of Christ'—and the Eucharistic body—'the sacrament of the real flesh.' So as not to be misunderstood, however, Ratramnus noted that 'it should not be supposed that in the mystery of the sacrament either the body of the Lord or his blood is not received by the faithful.' But that this is a figure of the body and the blood in the Eucharist, not the reality of the empirical body and blood of the historical Jesus Christ" (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 642).
    - In the 11th century the same controversy came up again, this time with Berengar of Tours arguing against Transubstantiation.
    - The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 "officially ruled" in favor of transubstantiation.
- **East and West Split (AD 1054)**
  - Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other.
  - The language divide: Latin in the West and Greek in the East; West typically appealed to Latin Fathers, and East to Greek Fathers.

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[19] Gottschalk of Orbais, *Shorter Confession*, translated by Victor Genke (2003, PL 121, Col. 347–350), http://pages.uoregon.edu/sshoemak/322/Texts/gottschalk_of_orbais.htm.

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- General Issues over which East and West disagreed:
  - West believed in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (*Filoque: 'and the Son'*), the East in the procession of the Spirit from the Father only.
  - East did not acknowledge the Pope, but saw five Patriarchs with equal authority.
  - East denied the immaculate conception of Mary and allowed lower clergy to marry.

Fifth Period: The Church under the papal hierarchy, and the scholastic theology (AD 1049–1294)

- **General Introduction to the Period** (Schaff, *History*, 5:3–4)
  - The classical age of Latin Christianity: the age of the papal theocracy, aiming to control the German Empire and the kingdoms of France, Spain, and England.
  - Rise of the great Mendicant orders
  - The crusades and the conquest and loss of the Holy Land.
  - It was the age of scholastic philosophy and theology.
  - The Inquisition was established, involving the theory of the persecution of Jews and heretics as a divine right, and carrying it into execution in awful scenes of torture and blood.
- **Scholasticism (11th–16th centuries)** (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 753)
  - A scholarly approach and method employed by many theologians during the latter part of the medieval period, the term being derived from the Latin *scholasticus*, meaning "learned."
  - As an approach, it joined together Christian theology and philosophy (especially that of Aristotle), seeking to find compatibility between faith and reason.
  - As a method, it involved composing lists of contradictory statements from several authoritative sources and applying logic to find their agreement.
  - The main figures associated with scholasticism are Anselm, Peter Abelard, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas.[20]
- **Crusades**
  - Most recognize seven crusades
  - "Driven by religion fervor, love of adventure, and dreams of personal profit, crusaders from western Europe for 200 years attempted to expel the Muslims from the Holy Land" (Shelley, *Church History*, 186).
  - The Crusades began in part in response to the difficulty pilgrims were having making their way from Europe to the Holy Land.
  - First Crusade (1095) broke out under Pope Urban II's encouragement
    - The cry was *Deus Volt!* (God wills it!)
    - Pope Urban promised plenary indulgences to those who went.

[20] On the connection between Luther and Scholastic theology see Martin Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology" and "Heidelberg Disputation," in *Career of the Reformer: I*, American Edition, Vol. 31 of *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957); and Carl Trueman, *Luther on the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 81ff.

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        - Horrible atrocities were involved (ibid., 188; Shelley even speaks of cannibalism).
    - There were even so called "children's crusades" in 1212. 30,000 children were involved and many were sold into slavery (Schaff, *History*, 5:266–268; Gonzáles, *Story,* 1:296).
- **Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109)**[21]
    - "With Anselm the systematic study of the doctrine of the atonement began … . There was one great thinker during the Middle Ages who not only reproduced the Augustinian anthropology, but also made a positive contribution to it, namely, Anselm of Canterbury" (Berkof, *Theology of Christian Doctrine*, 171 and 142).
    - Uses logic to explore the context of what he already believes. He provides a proof for the existence of God, in a time when there really was no such thing as an atheist.
    - The ontological argument for God's existence in the *Proslogium*:
        - "There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being you are, O Lord, our God" (III).
        - "So truly, therefore, do you exist, O Lord, my God, that you can not be conceived not to exist; and rightly. For, if a mind could conceive of a being better than you, the creature would rise above the Creator; and this is most absurd. And, indeed, whatever else there is, except you alone, can be conceived not to exist. To you alone, therefore, it belongs to exist more truly than all other beings, and hence in a higher degree than all others" (III).
        - The monk Gaunilo critiqued Anselm, saying his argument could be used to prove anything such as the perfect Island (cf. Frame, *History of Western Philosophy*, 136).
    - *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man)
        - The question: "For what cause or necessity, in sooth, God became man, and by his own death, as we believe and affirm, restored life to the world; when he might have done this, by means of some other being, angelic or human, or merely by his will" (I.I).
        - He rejected common theories: Ransom to Satan; Atonement only as an example
        - His explanation of the atonement (often called the satisfaction theory) (adapted from Berkof, *Theology of Christian Doctrine,* 172):
            - He finds the ultimate ground for the atonement in the honor of God. Man, who is obligated to honor God, did not honor God and thus contracted a debt. "God was robbed of his honor and this must be restored some way."
            - Two ways to vindicate divine honor: (1) punishment; (2) satisfaction. Punishment would the ruin of the human race, so God chose satisfaction

[21] Cf. Carl Trueman, *Medieval Church 3: Anselm,* https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/medievalchurch/id430337027.

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- The way of satisfaction includes two things: (1) willing obedience to God; (2) amends for the insult to God's honor by paying something above the actual debt. "But since even the smallest sin, as committed against an infinite God, outweighs the whole world and all that is not God, and the amends must be proportionate, it follows that these are beyond the power of man."
- The voluntary gift of the God-man was the only way for God's honor to be satisfied. As Christ voluntarily, and not necessarily died, He brought abundant glory and honor to God and reward which He did not need, but gives to man.

▪ The good (ibid., 173):
- "Its real value lies in the fact that it establishes the objective character of the atonement. And bases its necessity on the immutable nature of God, which makes it impossible that He should permit the violation of His honor to go unpunished."

▪ The bad (ibid., 174–175): Falls short of orthodox doctrine of penal substitution[22]
- "(a) it erroneously represents punishment and satisfaction as alternatives from which God could choose."
- "(b) it has no place for the idea that in His suffering Christ endured the penalty of sin, since it regards the sufferings of Christ as a voluntary tribute to the honor of God, as a superfluous merit which served to compensate the demerit of others … Catholic idea of penance applied to the work of Christ."
- (c) overly influenced by the laws of feudalism
- (d) Denies the atoning significance of his life.
- (e) It falls short of the full-orbed application of the merits of Christ to the sinner, emphasizing only the external.

- **Waldensians**
  - Beginnings of the movement
    - Southern France was their first home. Italy still has Waldensian churches, although the denomination is now quite liberal.
    - Derive their name from Peter Waldo, who died sometime before 1218.[23]
    - Peter has a conversion story like Anthony of Egypt. He sold all he had and began to life a simple life on the "plain precepts of the Bible" (Schaff, *History*, 5:495).
    - They were not licensed to preach by the local bishops.

[22] Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 140: "So Anselm is certainly thinking in terms of sin and punishment. In chapter 14, he says that 'the honor of God exists in the punishment of the wicked'… . So although he does not say explicitly that 'Jesus paid the penalty we deserved,' the idea of penal substitution is certainly implicit in his formulations. I wish he had put that more pointedly."
[23] Some argue that even before Waldo there was a movement of orthodox believers in the valleys of the Alps cf. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 456–57.

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- Assessments of the Movement
  - "They were the strictly biblical sect of the Middle Ages" (ibid., 5:493).
    - No doctrine of justification by faith in their extant writings.
    - Distinguishing principles of the early Waldensians (ibid., 5:502):
      - (1) They thought they ought to obey God rather than man. Rome took this to mean that they didn't have to submit to the Pope and [other] leaders, and on this point they were often persecuted.
      - (2) The authority of the Scriptures and their popular use by the laity
      - (3) The importance of preaching and the right of laymen to preach
      - Some denied infant baptism, purgatory, and prayers for the dead.
  - "Their doctrines from the twelfth century downwards, were substantially those now held by the Protestant churches" (Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, Vol. 1, 452, 457)
  - "They were pledged to the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They refused to accept Purgatory … [and the worship of the saints and Mary]. They retained confession, but the formula of absolution was not: 'I absolve thee,' but 'May God absolve thee from all sin.' … They held capital punishment to be contrary to the Scripture, and refused to take an oath. … The order of their worship was very simple. They read or recited the Word of God, which they knew for the greater part by heart, and expounded it in a practical and popular manner. … [T]hey never administered the sacraments; when these were needed, they had recourse to the Roman Catholic priests" (Giovanni Luzzi, *The Struggle for Christian Truth in Italy*, 152–53).
  - In 1270 the following was written by their opponents: "And because they [The Waldensians] presumed to interpret the words of the gospel in a sense of their own, not perceiving that there were any other, they said that the entire gospel ought to be obeyed literally. And they boasted that they wished to do this, and that they only were the true imitators of Christ … . This was their first heresy, contempt of the power of the church … . In their zeal they led many others astray along with them. They teach even little girls the words of the Gospels and the Epistles, so that they may be trained in error from their childhood … . They teach their docile and fluent disciples to repeat the word of the Gospel and the sayings of the apostles … by heart, in their common language, so that they may know how to teach others and lead the faithful astray" (David of Augsburg, "On the Waldensians of Bavaria, 1270" in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 127).

- **Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274)**
  - "He was born in the purple; almost literally on the hem of the imperial purple; for his own cousin was the Holy Roman Emperor" (Chesterton, *Aquinas,* 29). His father, a rich Count with a castle, planned to make Thomas a monk and eventually the abbot of a nearby monastery. Much to the dismay of his family (his brothers tried to lock him in a tower), he

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became "one of the Begging Friars, of the new order founded by Dominic the Spaniard" (ibid., 39).

- "It was Aquinas who baptised Aristotle" (ibid., 92). "It [an approach to Christianity influenced by Plato] thought of God too exclusively as a Spirit who purifies or a Saviour who redeems; and too little as a Creator who creates. That is why men like Aquinas thought it right to correct Plato by an appeal to Aristotle; Aristotle who took things as he found them, just as Aquinas accepted things as God created them" (ibid., 62).
- "It is impossible to overestimate his importance for the story of Christian theology and especially for the story of Roman Catholic theology" (Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 331).
    - Angelic Doctor (1323); Universal Doctor of the Church (1567 Council of Trent); "In 1879 Pope Leo XIII declared Thomism (Aquinas' teachings) to be eternally valid for the Roman Catholic Church" (Allison, *Historical Theology,* 756; Olson, *Christian Theology,* 331).
    - "While most of the Reformers respected Aquinas as a great genius, they regarded his theology as a serious diversion away from the biblical faith into philosophical speculation under the spell of Aristotelian philosophy" (Olson, *Christian Theology*, 335).
- Most important work was *Summa Theologica,* which was his systematic theology (ibid., 334).
    - Four-fold sense of Scripture: *literal, allegorical, tropological, analogical*—these were argued for on a basis similar to the Christological argument of both the Redemptive-Historical Hermeneutic and the Canonical Interpretation (Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, 1:225–6, 261–67).
    - Aquinas, with the help of Aristotelian philosophy, set forth the definitive Catholic explanation of transubstantiation:
        - "For it is evident that every agent acts according as it is in act. But every created agent is limited in its act, as being of a determinate genus and species: and consequently the action of every created agent bears upon some determinate act. Now the determination of everything in actual existence comes from its form. Consequently, no natural or created agent can act except by changing the form in something; and on this account every change made according to nature's laws is a formal change. But God is infinite act, as stated in I, 7, 1; 26, 2; hence His action extends to the whole nature of being. Therefore He can work not only formal conversion, so that diverse forms succeed each other in the same subject; but also the change of all being, so that, to wit, the whole substance of one thing be changed into the whole substance of another. And this is done by Divine power in this sacrament; for the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of Christ's body, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance

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of Christ's blood. Hence this is not a formal, but a substantial conversion; nor is it a kind of natural movement: but, with a name of its own, it can be called "transubstantiation" (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. 3, q. 75, art. 4: http://www.newadvent.org/summa/4075.htm).

- For an article that lays out some of the specific ways Aquinas' view of justification differs from the biblical view expressed by the Reformers see Reymond's critique of Gerstner: Robert L. Reymond, "Dr. John H. Gerstner on Thomas Aquinas as a Protestant" *WTJ* 59:1 (Spring 1997).

Sixth Period: The decay of mediaeval Catholicism, and the preparatory movements for the Reformation (AD 1294–1517)

- **General Introduction to the Period** (Schaff, *History,* 6:1–4)
  - The power of the papacy, which had asserted infallibility of judgment and dominion over all departments of human life, was undermined by the mistakes, pretensions, and worldliness of the papacy itself.
  - The religious unrest found expression in Bradwardine, Wycliffe and Huss.
  - The Renaissance, or the revival of classical culture, unshackled the minds of men.
  - The last period of the Middle Ages was a period of intellectual discontent, of self-introspection, a period of preparation for what was to come.
- **The State of Roman Catholicism**
  - "The following doctrines of the Roman Church must be kept in mind if we want a real picture of Catholicism at the time of Boniface VIII (1300 A.D.):
    - "(a) Meritoriousness of external work.—The doctrine of grace was forgotten and the merit of work, including prayers to the dead and prayers for the dead, was stressed. Asceticism with celibacy or virginity was esteemed the highest type of life.
    - "(b) Sacramentalism.—The simple doctrine of the ordinances as symbols of grace has been changed to the Roman idea of sacramentalism, the doctrine that Divine grace is granted through external means and that these means are controlled by the church.
    - "(c) The Pope is God's representative on earth; the vicar of Christ; head of the church.
    - "(d) The Pope and the clergy make up the visible church. The ordinary members exist for the purpose of being ruled.
    - "(e) The Pope is the ultimate judge in religious matters, but he is also the ultimate judge in secular matters since he is the ruler of all civil governments, of emperors, kings and princes. Civil governments exist only by papal permission.
    - "(f) Every law, even the law of God, may be set aside if the church should find it necessary. Denying the prerogative of the Roman Church is heresy, and the church must deal with it as such. It was against doctrines like these that so many earnest

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people protested" (Peder Stiansen, "Church Reform in the Late Middle Ages," [Part 1] *BibSac* 105 no. 418 (April 1948): 218).

- In 1300 Boniface issued the bull *Antiquorum Habet Fida Relatio* to institute the first Year of Jubilee, promising all who came to Rome plenary indulgence:
  - "We, confiding in the mercy of Almighty God, in the merits and power of these His Apostles, in the counsel of our brethren, and in the plenitude of the Apostolic authority, grant to all those who being truly penitent and confessing their sins, shall reverently visit these Basilicas in the present year 1300, commencing from the festival of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which has just been celebrated, and to all who being truly penitent, and shall confess their sins, and shall approach these Basilicas each succeeding hundredth year, not only a full and copious, but the most full pardon of all their sins" (*non solum plenam, et largiorem immo plenissimam omnium suorum concedemus, et concedimus veniam peccatorum*).[24]
  - "In one month two hundred thousand pilgrims visited Rome. All these strangers brought rich offerings; and the popes and the Romans saw their coffers replenished. Roman avarice soon fixed each Jubilee at fifty, then at thirty-three, and last at twenty-five years' interval" (D'Aubigné, *Reformation*, I:II).
- "In 1302 A.D., Boniface VIII had issued a bull 'Unam Sanctum,' the boldest claim ever made by anybody sitting in the bishop's chair in Rome. Boniface began by quoting Jeremiah 1:10 … [and] declared that there is only one church, outside of which there is no salvation" (Stiansen, "Church Reform," 219; cf. his explanation about three popes).
  - The last lines read: "Further, we declare, say, define and pronounce it to be altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature that he be subject to the Roman pontiff" ("The Bull of Boniface VIII., *Unam Sanctam*, Nov. 18, 1302," in Schaff, *Creeds*, 2:605).

- **John Wycliffe (1324–1384)**
  - Basic biography (from Daniell, *The Bible in English,* 70–76):
    - 1361—Became a fellow at Merton College, Oxford at thirty-seven where he was an outstanding scholastic philosopher, studying and teaching logic and metaphysics.
    - 1377—Pope Gregory XI condemns Wycliffe in five papal bulls. He is then summoned to answer charges of heresy found in his work *On Civil Dominion*.
    - 1382—His English translation of the entire Bible is completed. His followers were called 'Lollards' for the first time (a term of abuse) in a sermon. Following the sermon his works were denounced as heretical.

[24] Pope Francis declared 2016 an extraordinary year of Jubilee. In the bull *Misericordiae Vultus* he writes: "Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the Salve Regina, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus."

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- 1384—Died of stroke. He was later condemned at the council of Constance (1415). His remains were dug up and burned and his ashes were thrown in the River Swift (1428).

- Wycliffe's Bible
  - "It seems unlikely that Wyclif himself, pen in hand, translated any of 'his' Bible. But that the manuscripts were the work of men close to him, influenced by him, inspired by his teaching and preaching, there can be no doubt" (ibid., 73).
  - The Bibles associated with Wycliffe were translated from the Latin Vulgate.
- Assessment of his teaching (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 6:346).
  - He exalted preaching and insisted all people have access to the Scriptures.
  - He demanded the purity of the clergy and taught all men could marry.
  - He defined the Church as the congregation of the elect; taught that the Pope is not essential to the church.
  - Proved that transubstantiation was unbiblical.
  - Wycliffe taught that justification is by faith alone: "that faith is the basis of the justification of man unto God" (*De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, i.219). The doctrine of merit is denied, and Christ's mediation is made all-sufficient. He approached close to the Reformers when he pronounced "faith the supreme theology,"—*fides est summa theologia*—and only through the Scriptures can one become a Christian.
- Common themes in his writings:[25]
  - The gospel:

    > "[Every man] should have great and lasting sorrow for his sin, and a mind intent on Christ's righteousness and wisdom, and on Christ's passion, death, and mercy to forgive sin on true repentance; and let each man put his full trust in God's mercy, and in his own good life, and not in false pardons, nor in vanities, which men invent to avail after men's death for love of money, for such things avail not any man, but destroy those who trust in them" (*De Episcoporum Erroribus*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises of John De Wycliffe*, 45; cf. *Expositio Decalogi*, 5).

    - "Therefore Christ especially commanded his apostles and disciples to preach the Gospel, and not to shut themselves up in cloisters or churches to pray as some men" (*Speculum de Antichristo*, Vaughn, *Tract and Treatises*, 23; cf. *De Conversatione Ecclesiasticorum*, 13; *Of Feigned Contemplative Life,* 49).
  - Against the excesses of the Pope and the clergy:

[25] His work *Of the Leaven of the Pharisees* written in 1383 touches on all of these topics and can be found in: F. D. Matthew, *The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted* (London, Trubner and Company, 1880); http://lollardsoceity.org/pdfs/Matthew_EngWorksWyclif.pdf.

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- "These wicked prelates sell Christian men's souls to Satan for money, for which souls Christ shed his precious heart's-blood - upon the cross … and thus almost all men are conquered to the fiend, and these prelates show themselves very Antichrists, procurators of Satan, and traitors to Jesus Christ and his people" (Vaughn, *De Conversatione Ecclesiasticorum,* 15).[26]
- "[People often claim] that there is nothing lawful among Christian men without leave of the bishop of Rome, though he be Antichrist, full of simony and heresy. For commonly, of all priests he is the most contrary to Christ, both in life and teaching ; and he maintaineth more sin, by privileges, excommunications, and long pleas; and he is most proud against Christ's meekness, and most covetous of worldly goods and lordships" (ibid., 20).
- "Christian men should give more heed to Christ's Gospel and his life, than to any bulls from the sinful bishops of this world, or else they forsake Christ, and take Antichrist and Satan for their chief governor" (*Good Preaching Priests*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 30).

- Against indulgences:
  - He calls the whole system of indulgences, and pardons "a subtle merchandise of Antichrist's clerks, to magnify their counterfeit power, and to get worldly goods, and to cause men not to dread sin" (Vaughn, *De Conversatione Ecclesiasticorum* , 19).
  - "Marvelous it is that any sinful fool dare grant anything on the merit of saints, for all that ever any saint did may not bring a soul to heaven without the grace and might of Christ's passion … . In that passion, it is maintained 'all merits that are needful' will be found, and the judgment of God hereafter will not be found to have been influenced by the caprice or the biddings of man" (ibid).
- Emphasis on the Scriptures ('Holy Writ'):
  - At the end of his tract *Poor Preaching Priests* he adds this, "If any man can prove by Holy Writ or reason that these points are false, poor priests will meekly amend them, and heartily pray all good men to help them in the true cause, for the honour of God, the health of their souls, and the salvation of Christian nations" (*Good Preaching Priests,* Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 29).
  - "True men say that in this life, without special revelation, men know not what sin is venial and what is deadly, and that these terms venial and deadly, are inventions of new men, without authority of Holy Writ" (*De Episcoporum Erroribus*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 45).

[26] Wycliffe provides the following biblical basis for his sharp rebukes: " Christ and his apostles reproved Pharisees, and Herod, and heretics, in their absence and before the people, as the Gospels and Epistles witness, and this was for our example, to be followed with charity and discretion" (Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 21).

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- Cf. his work *How Antichrist and His Clerks Travail to Destroy Holy Writ, and to Make Christian men Unstable in the Faith, and to Set their Ground in Devils of Hell.*

- **John Huss (1372–1415)** (adapted from Allison, *Historical Theology*, 748)
  - Professor of philosophy at the University of Prague and preacher in the main church.
  - Drew heavily upon John Wycliffe:
    - "Teacher never had a more devoted pupil than the English Reformer had in Huss. The first three chapters of *De ecclesia* [*'On the Church,' his major work*] are little more than a series of extracts from Wycliff's treatise on the Church" (Schaff, *History*, 6:370).
    - Attacked clerical corruption in the Catholic Church
    - Criticized transubstantiation
    - Denounced some popes as heretics
  - He was excommunicated by the church, and his followers were placed under an interdict. Although he was promised safe travel to the Council of Constance, Huss was burned at the stake there in 1415. The Hussite movement spread throughout Bohemia.
  - "Huss died for his advocacy of Wycliffism. The sentence passed by the council coupled the two names together" (Schaff, *History*, 6:383).
  - "On arriving at the execution-ground … Huss knelt and prayed. For the last time the marshal of the empire asked him if he would recant to save his life. Said Huss: 'God is my witness that the evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached except with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. In the truth of the Gospel I have written, taught and preached; today I will gladly die" (Shelley, *Church History,* 232).
- **Erasmus (1466–1536)**
  - Erasmus was the "Prince of Humanists" (Gonzáles, *Story,* 2:10).
  - He published the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament, and in one way or another managed to influence each of the major Reformers.
  - He wrote *The Praise of Folly*, a scathing satirical attack on the excesses of Roman clergy.
  - The Greek New Testament (1516)
    - His work on the New Testament, drawing from several manuscripts was "ground breaking," and proved to be in many ways the genesis of modern textual criticism (cf. John D. Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages,* 66).
    - Erasmus' New Testament continued to be the standard Greek Text with few deviations for hundreds of years to come.
    - Though Erasmus never joined Luther, the second edition of his New Testament was the basis of Luther's German translation.
    - Tyndale's English translation was based on Erasmus. In addition Erasmus' text was the basis for the famous Geneva Bible (James White "Erasmus of Rotterdam: His New Testament and Its Importance.," http://vintage.aomin.org/erasmus.html).

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- It is also almost sure that Calvin "knew and used Erasmus in more than one edition [of his Greek New Testament]." (T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin*, 101).
- Ulrich Zwingli was a great admirer of Erasmus (Estep, *The Anabaptist Story,* 11).
- Erasmus respected the Anabaptists more than any other of the groups that broke from Rome (cf. Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, 261).

- Erasmus and the Reformers
  - Although Erasmus was initially counted in with the Reformers, His love of learning, his desires for independence and 'peace,' did not allow him to break from Rome.
  - To show his commitment to Rome, he wrote *Diatribe on the Freedom on the Will* against Luther. Luther vigorously responded with his *The Bondage of the Will.*
    - "Luther believed that the human will was enslaved, totally unable, apart from grace, to love or serve God. But Erasmus considered this a dangerous doctrine since it threatened to relieve man of his moral responsibility. What Luther regarded as basic to biblical religion, Erasmus dismissed in the name of scholarship" (Shelley, *Church History,* 313).
    - Luther's response to Erasmus includes these phrases: "I thought it outrageous to convey material of so low a quality in the trappings of such rare eloquence; it is like using gold or silver dishes to carry garden rubbish or dung" and "Your thoughts of God are too human" (Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston: 63, 87).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 12: A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY
(by Matt Johnston)

The History of Modern Christianity: 1517–Present Day

Seventh Period: The Evangelical Reformation and the Roman Catholic Reaction: From Luther to the Treaty of Westphalia (1517–1648)

- **General Introduction to the Period**
  - "The Reformation of the sixteenth century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history" (Schaff, *History*, 7:1).
  - "The Reformation was preceded and necessitated by the corruptions of the papacy, the decline of monasticism and scholastic theology, the growth of mysticism, the revival of letters, the resurrection of the Greek and Roman classics, the invention of the printing press, the discovery of a new world, the publication of the Greek Testament, the general spirit of enquiry, the striving after national independence and personal freedom" (ibid., 7:2).
  - "To set up a mediatorial caste between God and man—to obtain by works, by penance, and by money, the salvation which is the free gift of God—such is Popery. To open to all, through Jesus Christ, without any human mediator, without that power which calls itself the Church, free access to the great boon of eternal life which God offers to man—such is Christianity and the Reformation" (D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, I:II).
- **The Excesses of Relics As an Example of the Need for Reform in Calvin's Satirical: *Admonition, Showing the Advantages that Christendom Might Derive from an Inventory of Relics*, 1543:**[27]
  - "And yet his natural blood is exhibited in more than a hundred places … . I leave every man to judge what certainty can be had on such a subject, and whether it be not a manifest falsehood to say that the blood of Christ has been found seven or eight hundred years after his death, and in such quantities as to be diffused over the whole world, and this without any mention of it whatever in the ancient Church" (296).
  - "There is no town, however small, which has not some morsel of it [the cross], and this not only in the principal cathedral church of the district, but also in parish churches … . If all the pieces which could be found were collected into a heap, they would form a good ship-load, though the gospel testifies, that a single individual was able to carry it" (301–302).
  - "In regard to the crown of thorns, it would seem that its twigs had been planted that they might grow again. Otherwise I know not how it could have attained to such a size" (304).

[27] John Calvin, "Admonition, Showing the Advantages that Christendom Might Derive from an Inventory of Relics, "in *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters* (Reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983); Reymond, *Calvin*, 89–90, explains, "It did not seem to bother the fathers of Trent that the same object was venerated in different places. Jean Ferrand, the seventeenth-century Jesuit, even contended that such objects as the wood of the cross and the crown of thorns were so necessary for devotion to God, that God arranged their miraculous replication;" Fredrick the Wise, the ruler in Wittenberg where Luther lived, had a collection of relics that included 19,013 holy bones, "Those who viewed these relics on the designated day and made the stipulated contributions might receive from the pope indulgences for the reduction of purgatory, either for themselves or others, to the extent of 1,902,202 years and 270 days" (Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 53).

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- "The piece of broiled fish which Peter offered to him when he appeared on the sea-shore. It must have been wondrously well salted if it has kept for such a long series of ages! But, jesting apart, is it supposable that the apostles made relics of what they had actually prepared for dinner? Whoever does not perceive that the whole matter is an open mockery of God, I must leave as unworthy of being further addressed on the subject" (313).

- **Martin Luther (1483–1546)**
  - **July 2, 1505**: Luther vows to become a monk. "He was then twenty-one and a student at the University of Erfurt. As he returned to school after a visit with his parents, sudden lightning struck him to earth. In that single flash he saw the denouement of the drama of existence. There was God the all-terrible, Christ the inexorable, and all the leering fiends springing from their lurking places. It was no wonder that he cried out to his father's saint, patroness of miners, 'St. Anne help me! I will become a monk!'" (Bainton, *Here I Stand,* 25).
  - **November 1510**: Luther begins his trip to Rome. In Rome he sees first-hand the excesses of the Catholic Church. "[Luther] was climbing Pilate's stairs [in Rome] on hands and knees repeating a Pater Noster [Our Father] for each one and kissing each step for good measure in the hope of delivering a soul from purgatory. Luther regretted that his own father and mother were not yet dead and in purgatory so that he might confer on them so signal a favor. Failing that, he had resolved to release Grandpa Heine. The stairs were climbed the stairs were kissed. At the top Luther raised himself and exclaimed, not as legend would have it, 'The just shall live by faith!'—he was not yet that far advanced. What he said was, 'Who knows whether it is so?'" (ibid., 39).
  - **April 1515/October 1516**: Luther begins to lecture at Wittenburg: Romans and Galatians. "I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, 'the justice of God,' because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant … . Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that 'the just shall live by his faith.' Then I grasped the justice of God as that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on new meaning, and whereas before the 'justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven" (ibid., 49–50).
  - **October 31, 1517:** Luther nailed his *95 Theses* on the door of Castle Church. "They are no protest against the Pope and the Roman Church, or any of her doctrines, not even against

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indulgences, but only against their abuse … . The form only is Romish, the spirit and aim are Protestant" (Schaff, *History*, 7:157, 158).[28]

- **July 4, 1519**: Luther Debates Eck at Leipzig and Eck associates Luther with John Huss.[29]
- **June 15, 1520** Pope Leo X ratifies and signs a bull excommunicating Luther, calling for the burning of his books. December 10, 1520 Luther burned the papal bull.
- **Last half of 1520:** Three Great Reformation Treatises: *To the Christian Nobility of Germany*, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *The Liberty of a Christian Man*.
    - "These three works, taken together, represent perhaps Luther's most sustained and positive vision for what reformation should be" (Trueman, *Luther,* 46).
    - "The Word of God cannot be received and cherished by any works whatever but only by faith. Therefore it is clear that, as the soul needs only the Word of God for its life and righteousness, so it is justified by faith alone and not any works; for if it could be justified by anything else, it would not need the Word and consequently it would not need faith" (Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," *Three Treatises*, trans. W. A. Lambert, 280).
    - "Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all equally minister and teach" (ibid., 292).
    - "The works themselves do not justify him before God, but he does the works out of spontaneous love in obedience to God and considers nothing except the approval of God, whom he would most scrupulously obey in all things" (ibid., 295).
- **April 17–18, 1521:** Luther's two hearings at the Diet of Worms. "Since then Your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen … . Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise" (Bainton, 144).
- **May 4, 1521–March 3, 1522:** Luther is hidden in the Wartburg Castle, in Eisenach, by Prince Frederick. He translates the New Testament into German in 11 weeks, and begins work on the Old Testament translation.

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[28] In the preface to the reprinting of his *Theses*, in his collected works in 1545 Luther wrote: "I allow them to stand, that by them it may appear how weak I was, and in what a fluctuating state of mind, when I began this business. I was then a monk and a mad papist (*papista insanissimus*), and so submersed in the dogmas of the Pope that I would have readily murdered any person who denied obedience to the Pope" (Schaff, *History*, 7:157).

[29] An eyewitness description of Luther: "Martin of middle height, emaciated from care and study, so that you can almost count his bones through his skin. He is in the vigor of manhood and has a clear, penetrating voice. He is learned and has the Scripture at his fingers' ends. He knows Greek and Hebrew sufficiently to judge of the interpretations. A perfect forest of words and ideas stands at his command. He is affable and friendly, in no sense dour or arrogant. He is equal to anything. In company he is vivacious, jacose, always cheerful and gay no matter how hard his adversaries press him. Everyone chides him for the fault of being a little too insolent in his reproaches and more caustic than is prudent for an innovator of religion or becoming to a theologian" (Bainton, 87).

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- **1525:** Marries Catherine, an ex-nun, and writes *The Bondage of the Will*.[30]
- **October 1529:** The Marburg Colloquy, where Luther disagrees with Zwingli over the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.[31]

- **John Calvin (1509–1564)**
  - Initially studied theology, but switched to law when his father ran afoul of the church.
  - Calvin's father died when he was twenty-one (1531) so Calvin felt freed up to study the classics. It was sometime during these years that Calvin was exposed to Luther's ideas.
  - Calvin describes his conversion in the "Preface" to his *Commentary on the Psalms*: "And first, since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life. Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardor. I was quite surprised to find that before a year had elapsed, all who had any desire after purer doctrine were continually coming to me to learn, although I myself was as yet but a mere novice."
  - In November of 1533, Calvin's friend Nicholas Cop preached the opening sermon for the winter term at the University of Paris (filled with Lutheran-like doctrines). Calvin was so close to Cop that it is suspected that Calvin wrote the sermon.
  - Calvin fled France entirely, spending his exile in Basel Switzerland between 1534 and 1536
  - In March of 1536 he published the first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
    - "Calvin had done what is now clear no other theologian (not even Melanchthon) was capable of doing at that time. He had not only given genuine dogmatic form to the cardinal doctrines of the Reformation: he had molded those doctrines into one of the classic presentations of the Christian faith" (T. H. L. Park, *John Calvin*, 72).[32]
    - The work is addressed to King Francis I, King of France, where Evangelicals were fined, imprisoned, had their tongues slit and were even burned alive.
    - Opening paragraph: "Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of

[30] "[It was] a veritable sledge-hammer of a book, which contains Luther's most brilliant defense of his doctrines of Scripture, of the human will, and of the divine initiative in salvation. Along with his catechisms, it was one of his few books that he himself considered worthy of outliving him" (Trueman, *Luther*, 48).

[31] "Luther was wrong about the Supper, but not nearly so wrong as he would have been if, being wrong, he had said to his opponents: 'Brethren, this matter is a trifle; and it makes really very little difference what a man thinks about the table of the Lord'" (Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 42).

[32] Cf. Robert L. Reymond, *John Calvin: His Life and Influence*, 14–21, for several other assessments of the significance of Calvin's *Institutes* both ancient and modern.

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ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other. For, in the first place, no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves" (1.1.1).

- On predestination: "They who shut the gates that no one may dare seek a taste of this doctrine wrong men no less than God. For neither will anything else suffice to make us humble as we ought to be nor shall we otherwise sincerely feel how much we are obliged to God" (3.21.1).
- On prayer: "For nothing is more contrary to reverence for God than the levity that marks an excess of frivolity utterly devoid of awe. In this matter, the harder we find concentration to be, the more strenuously we ought to labor after it … . But here let us recall how unworthy it is, when God admits us to intimate conversation, to abuse his great kindness by mixing sacred and profane; but just as if the discourse were between us and an ordinary man, amidst our prayers we neglect him and flit about hither and thither" (3.20.5).

- **August 1536:** Calvin was on his way to Germany for a life of quiet study. He was forced to take an indirect route through Geneva where William Farel demanded he stay.
  - Again in his "Preface" to *Commentary on the Psalms*, Calvin explains what took place: "Wherever else I have gone, I have taken care to conceal that I was the author of that performance [*Institutes*]; and I had resolved to continue in the same privacy and obscurity, until at length William Farel detained me at Geneva, not so much by counsel and exhortation, as by a dreadful imprecation, which I felt to be as if God had from heaven laid his mighty hand upon me to arrest me … . And after having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to private studies for which I wished to keep myself free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement, and the tranquillity of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance, when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror, that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken."
- **1538–1541:** Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva. At this time Calvin pastored a church of French-speaking refugees in Strasbourg.
- **September 13, 1541:** "Calvin re-entered the city … never to relocate again … . Upon his return, Calvin hit the town preaching. Reassuming his pulpit ministry precisely where he had left off three years earlier—in the very *next* verse of his earlier exposition—Calvin became a mainstay, preaching multiple times on Sunday and, during some weeks, each weekday" (Steven J. Lawson, *The Expository Genius of John Calvin*, 13).
- **June 5, 1559**: Calvin founded the Geneva Academy, which became known as "The School of Death," because many graduates went on to martyrdom by ministering in France. "[The Academy was] destined to become the first Protestant 'university' in the world and the central

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educational institution of the Reformed church whose international influence over time far surpassed even the University of Wittenberg during Luther's lifetime. Calvin became its leading professor of theology, to which in time more than a thousand students from all parts of Europe sat daily to attend the lectures of Calvin and Beza, the Academy's first rector, and from which went forth missionaries throughout Europe and to the New World" (Reymond, *John Calvin*, 79).

- **Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531)** (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 758)
  - Swiss theologian, pastor and chaplain and Reformer in Zurich
  - He arrived at the Reformation principles of justification by faith alone and of Scripture alone independently of, but parallel to, Martin Luther.
  - He wrote a foundational work for the Reformation, *On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*, based on a sermon delivered at the Oetenbach convent, 1522 (*Zwingli and Bullinger*, vol. XXIV of the *Library of Christian Classics*, 49).
  - He held to the memorial view of the Lord's Supper against Luther.
  - The Anabaptists started in connection with Zwingli, but he was eventually against them, arguing in favor of infant baptism.[33]
- **The English Reformation** (cf. Shelley, *Church History*, 7:264ff.)
  - "Reformation came to England during the reign of Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547), but not until the reign of his daughter Elizabeth (r. 1558–1603) did it gain firm footing" (Ferguson, Beeke, Haykin, *Church History 101*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 585).
  - King Henry VIII (1509–1547)
    - 1521—Writes *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* in response to Luther's attack
    - 1527—Henry asked the Pope to declare his marriage of eighteen years to Catherine invalid.
    - 1533—Henry secretly marries Anne Boleyn, a lady-in-waiting of the court, and later that year an English court declared Henry's marriage to Catherine null and void. The Pope excommunicated Henry for his actions.
    - 1534—The Act of Supremacy declared: "The king's majesty justly and rightly is and ought to be and shall be reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church in England called *Anglicana Ecclesia*." (Shelley, *Church History*, 266). Thomas Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury, held the highest office in the Church of England under the king.
  - King Edward VI
    - 1547—Crowned king at age 10. His advisors were sympathetic to the Reformation.
    - 1553—Cranmer produced the Forty-Two Articles, which explained the faith of the Church of England along Protestant lines.
  - Bloody Mary

[33] For information on the Anabaptists see: William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism.*

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- 1553—Mary, the daughter of Catherine came to power. Mary was devotedly Catholic and committed to Rome.
- She saw to it that nearly 300 Protestants were burnt at the stake. John Foxe collected reports of the martyrdoms and recorded them in his *Book of Martyrs*.
- "Great indeed would be our mistake if we supposed that they suffered for the vague charge of refusing submission to the Pope, or desiring to maintain the independence of the Church of England. Nothing of the kind! The principal reason why they were burned was because they refused one of the peculiar doctrines of the Romish Church. On that doctrine, in almost every case, hinged their life or death. If they admitted it, they might live; if they refused it, they must die. The doctrine in question was the *real presence* of the body and blood of Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper" (J. C. Ryle, "The Special Reason Why Our Reformers Were Burned," *Light from Old Times*).

- Martyrdom of John Rogers (1555)
  - "He was the first of that noble band of Christian heroes who suffered martyrdom for God's truth in Queen Mary's reign. By his courage and constancy at the stake he supplied a glorious example to all who followed him, and mightily helped forward the English Reformation" (Ryle, *Light from Old Times*, 56).
  - Rogers was acquainted with William Tyndale and joined him in the work of Bible translation, very likely contributing to what is known as the Matthew's Bible.
  - He was brought before a council on charges of denying the real presence (*transubstantiation*) and for marrying as a priest.
  - Before the end of the year 1553 he was a prisoner, first in his own house, and afterwards in Newgate, where he was finally placed in January, 1554. Of his condition in prison we know but little, except that his wife was not allowed to see him, and that his treatment seems to have been very severe" (ibid., 60).
- 1563—The Thirty-Nine Articles are established as the authority in the Church of England with somewhat of a blend between Catholicism and Protestantism.

- **William Tyndale (1494–1536)**
  - Tyndale attended Oxford University: "[He] increased as well in the knowledge of tongues [he knew eight languages], and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted; insomuch that he, lying then in Magdalen Hall, read privily to certain students and fellows of Magdalen College some parcel of divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures" (John Foxe).
  - Tyndale left Oxford and served as a tutor for Sir John Walsh, a wealthy man of Gloucestershire. During this time, in response to a priest telling him that the Pope was more important that God's laws Tyndale said "If God spares my life, before many years pass I will make it possible for a boy behind the plow to know more Scripture than you do."

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- In 1524 Tyndale tried to get authorization from the King of England for his translation but was denied and had to flee London.
- In exile (Germany and then Belgium) he translated and published an English version of the New Testament. Before Tyndale there were only hand-written manuscripts of the Bible in English, translated from Latin. Tyndale's work is the first time the original Greek and Hebrew were translated for the English-speaking world.
  - Tyndale's John 3:16: "For God so loveth the worlde that he hath geven his only sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe."
  - Tyndale translated two-thirds of the Bible—all the New Testament (1st edition, 1526; 2nd edition, 1534) and Genesis through Chronicles (*The Pentateuch*, 1530; *Jonah*, 1531; however, Joshua through Chronicles was not published until after Tyndale's death, likely showing up in the Matthew Bible of 1537).
- He was finally captured when he was betrayed by Henry Phillips, the man he thought was his one true friend. He was charged as being a heretic and was imprisoned for eighteen months.
- William Tyndale was killed on October 6, 1536. He was tied to a stake, strangled by an executioner and burned. His dying prayer was, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes."
- Not long before his death Tyndale wrote to his friend John Frith: "I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would do this day, if all that is in earth, whether it be honor, pleasure, or riches might be given me."

- **The Roman Catholic Church Responds to the Reformation: The Council of Trent (1545–1563)**
  - There are reactions against abuses of indulgences and relics; however, they are still promoted (see the Twenty-Fifth Session, December 1563).
  - Decrees on the Bible (Fourth Session, April 8, 1546):
    - The Old Latin Vulgate with the Apocrypha is declared to be the official canon.
    - The tradition not found in Scripture is "preserved in the Catholic Church by continuous succession" and is of equal authority with the Scripture.
    - "Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall … wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, —whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures."
  - Baptismal Regeneration (Fifth Session, June 17, 1546):
    - "5. If anyone denies, that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted … let him be anathema."
  - Justification
    - "CANON VII.—If any one saith, that all works done before Justification, in whatsoever way they be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; or that the

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more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins: let him be anathema."

- "CANON IX.—If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will: let him be anathema."
- See also: Sixth Session, January 13, 1547 chs. I, V, VII, VIII.

- Sacraments
  - Anyone who does not hold to seven Sacraments is anathema (Seventh Session, March 3, 1547, *Canon I*, IV).
  - "If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous … let him be anathema" (ibid.).
  - "Canon III—If anyone saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be anathema" (Twenty-Second Session, September 17, 1562, Ch. IX, Canon III).

Eighth Period: The age of polemic orthodoxy and exclusive confessionalism, with reactionary and progressive movements. From the Treaty of Westphalia to the French Revolution. AD 1648–1790.

- **Overview of the Period**
  - "The Age of Reformation was marked by debate among Christians about the way of salvation. The Age of Reason was highlighted by the denial of any supernatural religion, respect for science and reason replaced the Christian faith as the cornerstone of Western culture" (Shelley, *Church History*, 309).
  - "By the eighteenth century, Christian Europe had wearied of constant religious strife and bloodshed. Intellectuals embraced the Enlightenment ideal of reason as the ultimate authority. Theology was made subject to philosophy. Deism taught that God created the world, subjected it to natural law, and let nature take its course. This was not the personal God of the Bible; deism was a rejection of revelation in the name of reason. Rationalism prevailed in the eighteenth century and continues to influence theology today" (Furgeson, Beeke, Haykin, *Church History 101*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 620).
  - The First Great Awakening (1730's–1740's) was led by men like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in colonial America.
- **The Thirty Years War (1618–1648) and the Treaty of Westphalia (1648)**

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- "Preparations for war were laid early in the seventeenth century when Protestants formed a league of German princes and the Catholics created a similar Catholic League. Fighting broke out in 1618" (Shelley, *Church* History, 303).
- "The Catholic forces could not subdue the Protestants in northern Germany and the Protestants could not control the Catholics in the south … . Out of sheer futility the religious zeal of Catholics and Calvinists cooled, and men began to question the territorial idea. Denominationalism was an alternative" (ibid., 304).
- "Perhaps rulers should not allow their decisions to be guided by religious or confessional considerations, but rather by their own self-interest, or by the interests of their subjects. Thus the modern secular state began to develop. And with it there appeared an attitude of doubt regarding matters that previous generations had taken for granted (Gonzáles, *Story*, 2:140–141).
- "Religious prejudice seemed like a far greater danger than atheism. So a thirst for tolerance and truths common to all men spread" (Shelley, *Church History*, 313).

- **Puritansim (1560–c. 1758)**
  - "That, surely, is the essential and most characteristic note of Puritanism—the feeling that the Reformation had not gone far enough" (Martyn Lloyd Jones, "Puritanism and Its Origin," *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*, 242).
  - "The term *Puritan* was first used in the 1560's of those English Protestants who considered the reforms under Queen Elizabeth incomplete and called for further 'purification' (from the Greek word *katharos*, 'pure'). Its negative connotation derived from its being a translation of the Latin term *catharus* (Puritan) or *cathari* (Puritans; from *katharos*), a title given to medieval heretics … . Throughout the sixteenth century it was used more often as a scornful adjective than as a substantive noun, and was rejected as slanderous in whatever quarter it was applied" (J. R. Beeke and R. J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, xv).
  - "Doctrinally, Puritanism was a kind of vigorous Calvinism; experientially, it was warm and contagious; evangelistically, it was aggressive, yet tender; ecclesiastically, it was theocentric and worshipful; politically, it aimed to be scriptural, balanced, and bound by conscience before God in the relations of king, Parliament, and subjects" (ibid., xix).
  - "Between 1629 and 1642 some 25,000 Puritans migrated to New England" (Shelley, *Church History*, 305).
- **John Owen (1616–1683)** (cf. Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 452–63).
  - Called "the prince of the English divines" and noted to be "a genius with learning second only to Calvin's"
  - "Throughout his teen years, young Owen studied eighteen to twenty hours per day."
  - 1643 he published *A Display of Arminianism,* which was a classic explanation of Calvinism that gained him instant notoriety.
  - 1650 Owen was appointed the official preacher to the state under Cromwell.

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- 1651 Owen became the dean of Christ Church College, Oxford, and eighteen months later became vice-chancellor of Oxford University under the chancellorship of Cromwell.
- Toward the end of his life he fell out of favor with the government.
- The day before his death, Owen wrote to a friend, "I am going to Him whom my soul has loved, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love—which is the whole ground of my consolation … . I am leaving the ship of the church in a storm; but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable. Live, and pray, and hope, and wait patiently, and do not despond; the promise stands invincible, that He will never leave us, nor forsake us."
- "A view of Christ as pierced will cause mourning in them that have received the promise of the Spirit of grace and supplication there mentioned … . The more believers are exercised in this view of Christ, the more humble they are, the more they are kept in that mourning frame which is universally opposite unto all the interests of sin, and which keeps the soul watchful against all its attempts. Sin never reigned in a humble, mourning soul … . Can any spiritual eye behold Christ dying for sin, and continue to live in sin? Shall we keep that alive in us which he died for, that it might not eternally destroy us? Can we behold him bleeding for our sins, and not endeavor to give them their death-wound? The efficacy of the exercise of faith herein unto the mortification of sin is known unto all believers by experience" ("The Dominion of Sin and Grace," *The Works of John Owen*, 7:520).
- "Nothing but the death of Christ *for* us will be the death of sin *in* us" (ibid., 522).
- "Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, unto the end of a self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world" ("Mortification of Sin in Believers," *The Works of John* Owen, 7:7).

- **Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)**
  - "Edwards was extraordinary. By many estimates, he was the most acute early American philosopher and the most brilliant of all American theologians. At least three of his many works—*Religious Affections, Freedom of the Will,* and *The Nature of True Virtue*—stand as masterpiece in the larger history of Christian literature" (Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 1).
  - He was minister at Northampton from February 15, 1727–June 22, 1750.
  - "Edwards was caught up in the Great Awakening, which began in 1740; he became one of the ablest instruments and defenders of the revival. He preached 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (Deut. 32:35) at Enfield, Connecticut, on July 8, 1741. The congregation was profoundly moved. A witness wrote, 'before the sermon was done, there was a great moaning and crying out throughout the whole house. What shall I do to be saved? Oh, I am going to hell! Oh, what shall I do for Christ!'" (Beeke & Peederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 199).
    - "The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all

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you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to state of new, and before altogether unexperienced, light and life, are in the hands of an angry God" ("Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Banner of Truth Edition, 2:9).

- 1750: Edwards was dismissed from the pastorate in Northampton for various reasons that seem to be connected with his rejection of the Half-Way covenant.[34]
- 1751: Edwards settles in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as a pastor and missionary to Indians.
- "All things else, with regard to worthiness, importance, and excellence, are perfectly as nothing in comparison of him. And therefore, if God has respect to things according to their nature and proportions, he must necessarily have the greatest respect to himself. It would be against the perfection of his nature, his wisdom, holiness, and perfect rectitude, whereby he is disposed to do everything that is fit to be done, to suppose otherwise" (Edwards, *The End for which God Created the World*, 1:98 [published 1765]).
- "The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will forever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another: but that which they shall in enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in anything else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen of God in them" (*God Glorified in Man's Dependence*, 2:5 [preached July 8,1731]).

Ninth Period: The spread of infidelity, and the revival of Christianity in Europe and America, with missionary efforts encircling the globe. From the French Revolution to the present time. AD 1790–

- **Overview of the Period** (cf. Ferguson, Beeke, Haykin, *Church History 101*, Kindle Electronic Edition)
  - "The church awakened once more to her true calling—to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. Missionaries went out from many parts of Europe and North America to build God's kingdom in Africa, Asia and Latin America" (Location 672).
  - "Two German philosophers cast a long shadow over the church during the nineteenth century: Immanuel Kant and Freidrich Shleiermacher" (Location 656).
  - Battle for the Bible against Rationalistic Modernism in the 20th century.
- **William Carey (1761–1834)**

[34] "As the zeal of the New England founders cooled, fewer men and women could bear public witness to the grace in their souls. To keep membership from shrinking drastically, many churches in 1662 had to settle for the Half-Way covenant. Under this policy the 'unawakened' could enjoy a kind of partial membership, baptizing their children and joining the congregational activities, but not taking full Communion" (Shelley, *Church History*, 344).

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- Much of Carey's denomination was either in bondage to a cold hyper-Calvinism or just beginning to come out of it.
- "Carey had to make the conditions in which his Society could be born. He could not merely apply the match to the tinder, for the tinder itself had to be prepared. When he woke to the missionary vision, he found to his amazement that most of his fellow Christians were fast asleep. He had to create the very desire which at length created the Mission; to provoke the demand which he himself would then supply" (Pearce, *William Carey*, 10).
- Carey was a poor shoemaker and pastor in a small village churches.
    - "In order to fix the conviction [of the world's need], to give length, breadth and depth to his thought, he makes a map of the world, with every country he puts whatever statements and figures will set forth the facts concerning its population, their condition, intellectual, moral, etc., and hangs it before him on the wall that he may read and ponder as he stitches and pegs away" (D. L. Leonard, "Carey, the Founder of Modern Missions," *BibSac* 049:196 [Oct 1892], 625).
- **1793—"The Enquiry"**: The full title is "An Enquiry Into The Obligations Of Christians, To Use Means For The Conversion Of The Heathens. In Which The Religious State Of The Different Nations Of The World, The Success Of Former Undertakings, And The Practicability Of Further Undertakings, Are Considered"[35]
    - "It must undoubtedly strike every considerate mind, what a vast proportion of the sons of Adam there are, who yet remain in the most deplorable state of heathen darkness, without any means of knowing the true God, except what are afforded them by the works of nature; and utterly destitute of the knowledge of the gospel of Christ, or of any means of obtaining it" (*Enquiry*, 62–63).
    - "As to their uncivilized, and barbarous way of living, this can be no objection to any, except those whose love of ease renders them unwilling to expose themselves to inconveniencies for the good of others … . It is no objection to commercial men. It only requires that we should have as much love to the souls of our fellow-creatures, and fellow sinners, as they have for the profits arising from a few otter-skins, and all these difficulties would be easily surmounted" (*Enquiry*, 68–69).
- **May 30–31, 1792:** Preached "The Deathless Sermon" to The Northampton Association of 'Particular Baptist' churches gathered in Nottingham. Carey taught Isaiah 54:2–3 and had two headings: (1) Expect great things from God; (2) Attempt great things for God.
- A group of small town pastors, nobodies from nowhere, really, united together to act on Carey's sermon and his *Inquiry*. They founded the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen (cf. Pearce, *Carey*, 84).

[35] http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf; Smith, *Life,* 23 explains: "This Enquiry has a literary interest of its own, as a contribution to the statistics and geography of the world, written in a cultured and almost finished style, such as few, if any, University men of that day could have produced, for none were impelled by such a motive as Carey had."

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- **June 13 1793–June 9, 1834:** Carey's Forty Years in India[36]
  - He labored for seven years before seeing his first native convert (1800).
  - Carey worked alongside Marshman and Ward (they were known as Serampore Trio).
  - "I am more in my element translating the Word of God than in any other employment" Carey wrote to Fuller in 1804" (Carey; as quoted in Pearce, 234).
  - "Carey was given the opportunity, the power and the joy of rendering God's Word, or precious portions thereof, into thirty-five languages to a very empire of peoples" (ibid., 10).
- "I have never yet repented of any sacrifice that I have made for the Gospel, but find that consolation of mind which can come from God alone" (Carey, as quoted in George Smith, *Life of William Carey*, 55).

- **The Rise of Liberalism**
  - Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) "wrote a famous essay titled *What Is Enlightenment?* In which he summed it up in the imperative *sapere aude!*—'think for yourself.' For him this applied in religion as in any other realm of culture … . For Kant, authentic religion … was simply living a life in accordance with rationally discernible duty" (Olson, *Christian Theology*, 541).
  - "Under the influence of Kant, liberal Protestant thinkers insisted on reinterpreting all doctrines and dogmas of Christianity in ethical and moral terms, and those that could not be so reinterpreted were neglected if not discarded entirely" (e.g., the Trinity; ibid., 550).
  - "Schleiermacher [1768–1734] wanted to find a point of contact for Christianity in his circle of friends, most of whom were quite skeptical of traditional religion. For them he wrote *On Religion: Addresses in Response to Its Cultured Critics.* In a sense this book laid the foundation for liberal theology to come. In it the author explained that the essence of religion lies not in rational proofs of the existence of God, supernaturally revealed dogmas or churchly rituals or formalities, but in a 'fundamental, distinct, and integrative element of human life and culture'—the feeling (*Gefühl*) of being utterly dependent on something infinite that manifests itself in and through finite things" (ibid., 543).
  - "Schleiermacher disposed of the need for the revelation given in Scripture … . The Bible is simply 'the original interpretation of the Christian feeling', and by means of our own feeling we are free to add further 'interpretation'" (Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 8).[37]

[36] In 1807 William's son, Felix Carey, who was twenty-one, was ordained and set apart for Burma. An excerpt from the letter reveals what William Carey wrote to his son at his parting: "Preach the never-failing Word of the Cross … . [B]e instant in season and out. Do not despise the patient instruction of one Burman … . Cultivate the utmost cordiality with them as your equals. Never let European pride and superiority appear at the Mission House, Rangoon. The day when our Savior says to you and to us 'Well done!' will make amends for all we feel at parting" (Pearce, 271).

[37] "Liberal theology very rarely pretends itself as being in opposition to Scripture. On the contrary, its exponents claimed the authority of the [NT] for the view that Christianity is life not doctrine" (Murray, 12).

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- "By 1857 Charles Hodge believed that the radical ideas Schleiermacher and his school 'are the life-blood of two-thirds of what passes for orthodoxy in Germany, and the affiliated systems in this country" (ibid., 10).
- "In the words of Fosdick a chief spokesmen for liberalism in 1924: 'Today there are two parties in the churches. They are active in controversy now, and every day their consciousness of a difference becomes more sharp and clear. The crux of their conflict lies at this point: one part thinks that the essence of Christianity is its original mental frameworks; the other party is convinced that the essence of Christianity is its abiding experiences'" (Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 15).
- J. Gresham Machen was Fosdick's main opponent.
  - "Modern liberalism has lost all sense of the gulf that separates the creature from the Creator; its doctrine of man follows naturally from its doctrine of God … . At the very root of the modern liberal movement is the loss of the consciousness of sin" (Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 55).
  - "According to Christian belief, man exists for the sake of God; according to the liberal Church, in practice if not in theory, God exists for the sake of man" (ibid., 129).

- **Important Events in the Roman Catholic Church in the 19th and 20th Century**
  - Dec. 8, 1854—Pope Pius IX declared that the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary was a divinely revealed fact in his bull *Ineffabilis Deus*: "We concluded that we should no longer delay in decreeing and defining by our supreme authority the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin" (*Ineffabilis Deus*; then he says to deny it is to suffer shipwreck in the faith).
  - Vatican Council I (1869–1870) was convened by Pope Pius IX.
    - Against modern liberalism and rationalism (cf. Schaff, *Creeds*, 1:137).
    - "We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra* … he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals" (Fourth Session, Chapter IV).
  - November 1, 1950 Pope Pius XII declared by his own authority that "the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory" (*Munificentissimus Deus,* 44; cf. 45 for the anathema).
  - Vatican Council II (1962–1965) was convened by Pope John XXIII and was an *aggiornamento* (updating) of the Catholic Church. The Council showed a change in the Roman Church's approach to winning people (protestants and otherwise) to the Roman Catholic Faith.[38]

[38] "In today's religious panorama it is evident that Catholicism has a very clear program in its pursuit of catholicity. This is particularly noticeable in its ecumenical strategy following the Second Vatican Council—every opportunity to advance this cause has been seized upon. The apparent signs of willingness for dialogue and availability for interaction with evangelicals should make them ask themselves whether the final goal of the Catholic church is not in actual fact the extension of its own

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- **Inerrancy in the Modern Era** (adapted from Allison, *Historical Theology* 109–119).
  - "The ancient geocentric theory of the universe proposed by Ptolemy … was replaced by the heliocentric theory of Copernicus [1473–1543]… . The impact on current thinking was immense … . Similarly, the discovery of new worlds and new people—many of whom followed religions other than Christianity—raised questions about their origins, the rightness of their beliefs and so forth."
  - **Socinianism (16th–17th century)** allowed for errors in portions of the Scripture such as records of historical events, morals, and descriptions of natural or scientific matters. In response, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) explained that by saving faith "a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word because the authority of God himself speaks in it" (14.2).
  - **Isaac La Peyrère (1592–1676)** said humans had been around for 50,000 years and Adam was not the first man. He is said to have set off the warfare between theology and science.
  - **Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677)** insisted that human reason stands above Scripture and judges Scripture … . [He] followed Descartes in viewing man himself, as a thinking subject as the starting point of human knowledge (thus his famous phrase: *cogito, ergo sum*).
    - He was the first to deny authorship of the Pentateuch. He pointed to Numbers 12:3 and Moses' death (Deut 34).
    - Influenced others such as Jean LeClerc (1657–1736), "the father of biblical criticism."
  - "Biblical criticism spread to Great Britain as well and was particularly evident in English Deism. This eighteenth-century movement attacked the truthfulness of biblical statements as part of a larger attack on scriptural revelation itself as being subservient to reason."
  - "Both English Deism and the early development of German biblical criticism were largely a theological attack against Scripture. Full-scale attacks against the truthfulness of Scripture awaited another development known as the documentary hypothesis. This series of theories proposes that the Pentateuch is a collection of selections from several written documents (abbreviated *JEPD*)… composed by different authors at different places [over time]."
    - Originated in 1753 when Astruc observed that the Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1 is different from that used in Genesis 2.
    - The *JEPD* theory was introduced to the English speaking world by William Robert Smith in his article entitled 'Bible' in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1875).
  - **1859: Darwin's *Origin of Species*** is first published. In response, many began to distinguish between *inerrancy*, which means that the Bible is without error and *infallibility*, which many defined as meaning that the Bible is true in matters of faith and practice. Thus, this distinction allows for historical and scientific errors in the Bible.
  - Many seminaries drifted in their commitment to inerrancy, espousing instead infallibility:

synthesis so as to include the evangelicals' ideals within its own horizons" (Leonardo De Chirico, "An Evangelical Approach Towards Understanding Roman Catholicism," vaticanfiles.org).

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- Fuller Theological Seminary, 1947: "The books which form the canon of the Old and New Testaments as originally given are plenarily [fully] inspired and free from error in the whole and in the part. These books constitute the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."
- Fuller Theological Seminary, 1971: "Scripture is an essential part and trustworthy record of this divine disclosure. All the books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

- Karl Barth (Neo-orthodox) explicitly denied the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and instead taught that the Bible becomes the Word of God, but that it isn't the Word of God on its own.
- Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978):
  - It was "an interdenominational joint effort by hundreds of evangelical scholars and leaders to defend biblical inerrancy against the trend toward liberal and neo-orthodox conceptions of Scripture" (Introductory Note).
  - "The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority" (Preface).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 13: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE
Study 1: Which Church Is God's Will for Me? (by Jonathan Anderson)

Should I stay in my church or should I find another one? This is one of the hardest questions for a pastor to answer. Sometimes it comes from a selfish heart, such as, "The music pastor won't let my son play the drums." However, it often comes from someone who genuinely wants wisdom. For example, if someone comes with this question, and the circumstances revolve around difficulties with their church leadership, giving counsel can become challenging very quickly.

Imagine our own culpability as we try to advise or counsel someone trying to answer this question. We could actually encourage or empower a divisive, dissentious, or disgruntled family to go against godly (though imperfect) leaders whom God has actually placed over them. We have all seen the "so-called facts" provided, which seemed to present a clear-cut case of unbiblical and ungodly leadership. But as is often the case, we find out afterwards that evidence which would have vindicated the leadership and indicted the disgruntled sheep was conveniently omitted. "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov 18:13).

On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine a worse scenario than preventing a true sheep from breaking away from disguised wolves, because we quickly encouraged them to serve where they are and remain loyal. After all, every church has its fair share of flaws, right? In a world where false shepherds love to feed themselves by fleecing sheep and goats alike, I'm not comfortable with blind encouragement towards loyalty to every social gathering that calls itself a church of Jesus Christ.

Early in my ministry, I crippled myself in these conversations, because I imagined that according to my own wisdom that I was the judge over the trial. The responsibility fell to me to weigh the evidence and give a verdict. Any personal wisdom or insight is wrong for many reasons. Besides the fact that I lack the wisdom of Solomon, I am never the judge of another's church, no matter how much wisdom I have. I felt an impossible responsibility to give a verdict about leaders, philosophies, and convictions held by ministries of which I was largely unaware. Yet I have seen the foolishness of thinking that I could gain enough information from one conversation, and more importantly, that I was even supposed to sit as a personal judge over others.

There is a better way. Instead of making a personal judgment call and trying to micro-manage people's lives, we must simply tell them where God desires for them to worship and serve. I realize that the use of the word "simply" in that last sentence might seem absurd. You may be wondering, *How can we possibly presume to tell someone which church God wants anyone to go to?* Fortunately, we don't have to presume.

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God tells us in His Word *precisely* what His will is for His children. They will need to inform their minds with what Christ's church really is, and submit to it in their heart with their lives. If God is passionate about His people (Zeph 3:17), if He loves His church (Eph 5:25), and if involvement in the church is important for the edification, strength, unity, and maturity of His children (Eph 4:10–16), then we can be sure that a true knowledge of God in His Word gives us everything we need to discern where God wants us to worship, serve, and be equipped (2 Pet 1:2–4, 19–21). God wants you to go to a church that has the following non-negotiable realities:

1) God's Voice Is the Only One Heard in the Church

2) Qualified Men Lead the Church

3) Kingdom Membership Is Manifested in Church Membership

Or, more simply stated:

1) Preaching of the Word

2) Qualified Leadership

3) Church Discipline

Please allow me to be candid. This list of non-negotiables has temporal limitations. Due to the climate of American Evangelicalism, the way one articulates what the unchanging church of Jesus Christ actually is will change in order to faithfully stand against the common errors of the day. You would be right to ask how a "non-negotiable" could be on or off my list based on circumstances within the American church. Allow me to explain using an illustration from church history.

In the English Reformation, hundreds died opposing the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. For English Reformers, their short list of what constitutes a church included primarily the preaching of the Word of God and the proper administration of the Lord's Supper. I agree, I concur, and do not doubt that they died for a cardinal doctrine—the sufficiency of Christ's once and for all priestly work on the cross (not to mention that the propitiatory mass worships a different Christ than the one in the New Testament). Now, for them, church discipline wasn't necessarily in the forefront because Rome practiced church discipline (and disciplined Protestant bishops with capital punishment). My list doesn't include *proper administration of the ordinances* because that isn't the particular threat to the gospel in Protestant churches today.

Admittedly, this document has a life span. It may not be helpful for untaught Christians who are asking this same question 500 years from now. However, what makes a true church is unchanging, just like the gospel is unchanging. To that end, regardless of the fact that transubstantiation will always

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be a heresy, I didn't put it on my list because of today's climate in Evangelicalism. Similarly, regardless of the fact that English Reformers didn't put church discipline on their list,[1] it was just as essential of a true church then as it is now.

God's Voice Is the Only One Heard in the Church

This non-negotiable means the **preaching of the Word**. Each reality of a true church is a simple statement, but I am also providing a brief description for each of the three. The brief description makes for a more memorable outline, but the actual heading is my attempt to help an untaught Christian discern what is meant by the brief description. In conversation I would try to use the full statement given in the heading. For instance, it isn't always helpful to tell a young Christian that the Word needs to be taught in church, if their pastor loads a man-made message full of biblical references. You have to be exposed to the true exposition of God's Word, taste its intricacies, and be transformed by it before you can know whether you are truly listening to a faithful, exegetical exposition of God's Word. It takes discernment to recognize if the pastor is faithfully teaching God's Word in an expository manner.

Christ is the Head of the church. He is the authority, and He is in control (Eph 1:20–23; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18–20).[2] Tt is common for Paul to couple Christ's authority and dominion over all things universal with His Headship and control over the church particular (cf. Eph 1:20–21 with vv. 22–23; Col 1:15–17 with vv. 18–20; Col 2:10 with v. 19). Christ is in control over the church; He leads the church, governs the church, and feeds the church with the spiritual nourishment and instruction necessary for our growth and maturing good. The way this happens is through the proclamation of God's Word. If God is the Head, then it goes without saying that the only mouth on this body is His. His is the only voice. His is the only message. His is the only plan and blueprint for ministry.

Jesus' voice is the only voice in the church. All other voices are imposters, and minimum-wage shepherds (John 10:12–13). This is what Jesus refers to when He talks about His voice as a shepherd (John 10:3–4), and the dilemma of having competition between the voices of a stranger and the Shepherd. True sheep hear Christ's voice and don't recognize the other voices (John 10:5). True sheep

[1] It is interesting to note that the neglect of this doctrine produced such a compromised situation within the visible Anglican church, that the Puritans of the next century (17th) realized that "Holy Discipline" is a necessary function of any true church.

[2] For a helpful study on *kephalḗ*, (the Greek word for "head"), see Wayne Grudem, *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 145–202.

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will follow the preaching of God's Word. Christ's church hears His voice clearly and follows joyfully, while there is static interference between the voice of a stranger and a true Christian's ear.

In order to answer the question, *Which church does God want me to attend*, the sheep of Jesus Christ need to listen for Christ's voice. Wherever there is a body of believers, you will inevitably hear the voice of God and not the voice of man. And, you will see true sheep submitting to His voice and following His leadership (John 10:26–27).

In both of Paul's letters to Timothy, his disciple in the ministry and pastor at Ephesus, he was told to maintain the reading and preaching of God's Word. Failure at this point renders all other ministry, labor, praying, discipling, observing of ordinances, meetings of needs, and singing of songs absolutely vain. For instance, in the first letter he wrote, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1 Tim 4:13–16).

In his second letter to Timothy, he wrote, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim 4:1–2).

These are not the lone occurrences in the pastoral epistles with a charge for God's Word to be read and taught. If you think that the teaching of the truth, sound doctrine, holding to the faith, and the entrustment of it—ensuring that God's voice is the only voice in the church—is not a major concern, then consider these additional texts: 1 Tim 1:3–7, 18–19; 3:2; 4:1–6; 5:17; 6:2–5, 20–21; 2 Tim 1:13–14; 2:2, 14–18, 24–25; 3:10–17; Titus 1:1, 3, 9, 10–14; 2:1–2, 7, 15; 3:1, 8–9.

These passages provide the positive instruction from God on how He wants us to find a church where His voice is heard clearly. It is helpful (and unfortunately necessary) to point out that the opposite of God's voice being heard clearly is not God's voice being silenced, but being twisted, edited, and altered. The opposite of God's voice being heard exclusively isn't God's voice not being heard, but God's voice being overpowered by the voice of strangers, hired hands, and false shepherds. How do they do it? Here's a short list from their playbook:

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– *They cast doubt on what God said.* "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden"?'" (Gen 3:1).

– *They deny what God said.* "The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die!'" (Gen 3:4).

– *They affirm and quote God's Word, but supply another meaning.* "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us'? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. The wise men are put to shame, they are dismayed and caught; behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD, and what kind of wisdom do they have?" (Jer 8:8–9).

– *They create their own message and say, "Thus says the Lord"* (Jer 23:16–22, 25–28, 32).

– *They call the biblical message the opinion of the preacher and contradict it with their own opinion*. (Amos 7:10–17). Pay attention to Amaziah, who labels Amos' message as merely human (v. 11) and calls him to stop prophesying (v. 13). Amos then proceeds to speak more of God's Word (vv. 16a, 17a).

– *They distract from God's Word by focusing on what is marginal, academic, and fruitless* (1 Tim 1:4, 6–7; 4:7).

– *They affirm parts of sound doctrine with their lips, but deny holiness with their life* (Titus 1:16; 2 Pet 2:1–3, 18–22; Jude 4).

– *They twist and pervert the meaning of Scripture from its original intent* (2 Pet 3:16).

As you can see, these tactics are timeless. It takes some time to show an untaught Christian what they must see in God's Word, which would ultimately enable them to see the subtleties of the enemy. He does his best and most deceptive work, not in the world, but within the church as an angel of light.

Qualified Men Lead the Church

This non-negotiable means having **qualified leadership**. I would enjoy using the phrase "qualified elders," but that may confuse the issue in many people's minds. I prefer the biblical terminology and substance, but I wouldn't want to sway someone from a biblical church that has godly and qualified men giving oversight, yet uses a term other than "elder." (Some denominational traditions use other terms.)

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 13: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE
Study 1: Which Church Is God's Will for Me? (by Jonathan Anderson)

It is hard to overestimate the importance of church leadership. You may have heard the satirical expression, "The monkeys are running the zoo!" Though I have never gone to such a proverbial zoo, I can imagine how chaotic and dangerous that situation would be in real life. The same danger threatens churches all over the globe. Unqualified leadership will potentially harm the sheep, distort the gospel, allow wolves into the church, and dishonor Christ.

God alone has authority in the church. As the Head of the church, He has told us in His Word how the church should be run. He has given a delegated authority to men who: 1) desire to bear responsibility for souls, 2) meet certain character requirements, and 3) are recognized as gifted for the task of leading. Paul lists for Timothy and Titus the necessary character requirements for church leaders:

Character Quality	1 Timothy 3	Titus 1:
Above reproach	2	6, 7
Husband of one wife	2	6
Temperate, sober-minded	2	
Prudent, focused-discernment	2	8
Respectable	2	
Hospitable	2	8
Able to teach	2	
Not addicted to wine	3	7
Not pugnacious	3	7
Gentle	3	
Free from the love of money	3	7
Manages his home well	4	
Dignified parent	4	
Not a new convert	6	
Good reputation with outsiders	7	
Having faithful children, who can't be accused of loose living		6
Not self-willed		7
Not quick-tempered		7
Loving what is good		8
Just		8
Devout		8
Knows the Bible to sufficiently promote the truth		9
Knows the Bible to sufficiently refute error		9

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This list is daunting! I am soberly evaluating my own weaknesses as I list them. However, far from calling for perfection, they call for a life lived with such godliness that when an enemy of the gospel maligns and tries to reproach the elder, the whole slanderous project falls apart at takeoff. That's because the elder's character is manifestly known by the believers at his church, and he is above reproach.

When it comes to answering the question, *Which church does God want me to attend?* you have to avoid seeking to find the kind of leaders you might naturally want. Instead, you must find leaders whom God has designated in these two passages. Imagine finding the pastor of your dreams who happens to be characterized as "self-willed." This man may be gregarious, funny and lively in the pulpit, and he makes all your visiting friends feel at home and comfortable. But what happens when the superficially ideal pastor struggles not to impose his will, to seek his own ends, and to pursue selfish ambition? How can this man on a weekly basis, think so little of himself that he will lose himself in what God has said, and unleash it for his people in such a way that Christ remains the Head of the church? His own message, his own desires, his own goals will captivate him, and he will lead the church slowly, perhaps even unwittingly to some degree, away from Christ as he preaches himself (2 Cor 4:5; 11:2–3). Clearly, every one of these qualifications is important.

From an evaluation standpoint, you don't have to go and spend 40 hours a week with every elder to see if elder #4 manages his home as well as elder #5. No, the issue is one of godly credibility and humility before the Word. When the church is given careful oversight by such men, you can trust them as God's delegated leadership over your church! That is refreshingly simple. I understand there are many who have been burned by bad leadership, but no one has ever been burned by Christ, and He has ordered His church this way. We can trust Him entirely!

Kingdom Membership Is Manifested in Church Membership

This non-negotiable means **church discipline**. If you want to know which church God wants you to commit to, He wants you to go where the Christians are! That may sound unhelpful, but let me explain. There are all sorts of gatherings that don't constitute churches. No one, to my knowledge, has ever threatened to call the line at the grocery store a church. Let's suppose that a biblically-qualified man, who was called of God and gifted to teach, went to a supermarket and began preaching the gospel. Is that a church?

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You would likely respond, "Of course not, because it would only satisfy points one and two, but not three." But is that a hasty response? Let's send this same imaginary preacher down the street to fulfill numbers one and two at a wholesale membership store. Now we have "membership," but would simple membership now make it a church? What's the difference between signing up for a club and church membership? The difference is the nature of that membership. Membership in a church isn't just an affirmation of the Christian to the truth of the gospel, but also an affirmation from heaven carried out on earth. It recognizes and affirms that members are forgiven, blood-bought sinners who have citizenship in the coming kingdom.

I realize that the majority of "churches" in America don't practice church discipline. There is a simple reason that I hold that church discipline is a non-negotiable of the church of Jesus Christ. It has to do with the nature of the church and the nature of church discipline. Church discipline (or a better term "church membership") is the manifest delineation of those who are covered by the blood of Christ and forgiven versus those who are still in their sins living in an unrepentant way. There are a few passages which teach us church discipline (Matt 16:18–20; 18:15–20; Titus 3:10–11), and there are several which teach how it was carried out in the New Testament church (Acts 5:1–11; 1 Cor 5:1–5; 2 Cor 2:5–11; 1 Tim 1:18–20; 2 Tim 2:16–18).

In order to prove that church discipline is not just right, but actually a non-negotiable, I'm going to focus primarily on the two passages in Matthew. But in order to summarize the rest of the teachings, let me make a few comments about the purpose of discipline in general.

1) Discipline is for the purpose of purity of the church.

2) Discipline is loving to the church.

3) Discipline is loving to the person being disciplined.

I'm going to presume that no one is going to argue the first two points,[3] but the third point causes many problems. The reason the process of discipline is loving to the person being disciplined is two-fold. When the church excommunicates someone from fellowship, they are simply agreeing with what God has said about anyone living an unrepentant lifestyle—they are still in their sin, outside the church, and unreconciled to God. It is loving because it alerts the individual to their need, instead of strengthening the deception that they are a Christian when they aren't. It is loving to the person who is disciplined, because the goal of church discipline is repentance and restoration: "If he listens to you,

[3] It is obvious that eradicating cancer is loving to the body. In the same way, a father's love is called into question when he would tolerate housing a stranger in his home who wants to kill his own children. This is why the warnings about wolves in the midst of the sheepfold are so alarming, sobering, and urgent.

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you have won your brother" (Matt 18:16). Matthew 16:18–20 is most helpful in this discussion for many reasons, but I'll simplify it and focus on two reasons. One, this is the first mention of the church in the entire Bible. It is no small thing that at the very introduction of the church to humanity, Jesus teaches about discipline.

Second, notice verse 19: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Jesus Christ is actually giving a delegated authority to Peter (and all who lead the church with him; cf. Matt 18:1 with v. 18; cf. John 20:19–23) to faithfully proclaim the gospel and call sinners to repent. The call of the gospel includes "Repent … be baptized … " (Acts 2:38) as well as many others, including, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" (Acts 2:40).

When sinners repent, entrance to the church and gaining the promises of the kingdom are simultaneous (Acts 2:41–47). To that point, entrance to the church and entrance to the kingdom ought to be as identical as possible. In verse 18 it says that whatever is bound on earth shall have been bound in heaven. This means that when a sinner doesn't repent of a sinful lifestyle when called to it (Matt 18:15–20), the church must disfellowship with him. And when this happens, that sin will have already been bound in heaven! This is a unique construction in Greek called a future perfect periphrastic. What that means is that in the future (i.e., after Christ's resurrection and Pentecost), when discipline happens in the church on earth, the same reality will have already been the case in heaven.

The picture is the harmonic resonance that occurs between two perfectly matched tuning forks. When one is struck next to the second, you can actually grab it and silence its reverberating and you will hear the second one vibrating simply because of the harmonic resonance. This symbolizes what happens in church discipline. God has desired that the church be the very vehicle where His children can have encouragement and stability in the evaluating of their faith. Outside the church, a regenerate individual would be helpless in his ability to identify true, saving faith and to enjoy assurance. But inside the church, kingdom citizenship is reflected by church membership. When someone's life pattern contradicts the gospel, and they don't respond to the appropriate loving advances of the church body (Matt 18:15–17), then excommunication leaves them on their own, outside the benefits of the church, with the hope that they would repent and be restored, and enjoying the assurance that their faith is keeping them in a position of trusting in the finished work of Christ.

There are perhaps countless issues that will strengthen or weaken the church. These three, however, are certainly ones that must be in place for Christ to own an assembly as His church. There

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may be more non-negotiables (like transubstantiation, illustrated above, which pertains to cardinal doctrines), but there are certainly not fewer. If you or someone you are seeking to advise finds himself in a "church" that doesn't meet this criteria, encourage him to seek out his leadership and see if those leaders are planning on moving in this direction of submission to Christ. If not, then he needs to find a new church where he can be a member. By understanding some foundational ecclesiology (i.e., the doctrine of the church), we can have confidence that we aren't judging anyone, but we are submitting to the Head of the church, Jesus Christ.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 13: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE
Study 2: Corporate Church Discipline

Church discipline is necessary to protect the purity and the unity of the church. We learn that the grace of the confrontation process results most often in repentance rather than disfellowship. We must be concerned first with our personal holiness and then bear each other's burdens. To love one another, we are called to speak truth into their lives in the form of exhortation, encouragement, and admonishment.

The principles found within this section on church discipline are a compilation of materials—some developed by Grace Immanuel Bible Church, Jupiter, FL, as well as many adaptations from materials of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, under the leadership of Dr. John MacArthur. We are deeply indebted to Dr. MacArthur and the pastoral team at Grace Community for their labors and biblical clarity through the years on this vital subject.

Bible passages for study:

Gal 6:1–10	Matt 18:12–18	1 Cor 5	1 Thess 5:14
1 Tim 5:20; 6:3–5	Acts 5:1–10	Rom 16:17	Titus 1:10–16
Titus 2:15; 3:10–11	2 Thess 3	Rev 2:1–21	1 Cor 11:14, 27–32

Objections to Church Discipline

1. Gossip in the church.

2. Church should be accepting and loving. Discipline is unloving.

3. Church should not be fearful of sin or of those who are weak in faith.

4. Church should be more tolerant and inclusive. We're all sinners. Stubborn error should not be disciplined, but a sentiment of patience and kindness should apply.

Responses to Church Discipline Objections

1. Each person in the flock must become comfortable and proactive in the early stages.

    a) Personal and private confrontation of the person in the trespass is designed to win a brother back.

    b) Each must speak truth in love and a spirit of gentleness. Confronting sin with truth is the most loving thing we can do.

    c) The personal discipleship process has goal of strengthening faith, confronting lies, seeking repentance and restoring the unrepentant to fruitful fellowship.

2. The church must never invite or allow unrepentant sin in its midst. Church purity is at risk.

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3. The church must not allow disunity or divisiveness to spread in the flock. This undermines leaders and disrupts the church's purity.

4. The discipline process begins with personal purity and is executed by unifying peacemakers.

a) We avoid factious behavior.

b) We are always about strengthening the hand of everyone in gospel ministry.

c) We diligently address any impurity in the church.

d) Christ wants His people and His church to be pure.

First Duty: Personal Purity and Discipleship

It is our duty in the church to bear our own burden and the burdens of others (Gal 6:1–5).

1. Our first concern is that we are personally walking in holiness.

2. Galatians 6 specifically commands that we have a loving responsibility to the brother who is caught in a trespass.

3. We first bear our own burdens and then we help others in their Christian walk.

4. Loving one another is to speak the truth (Eph 4:15).

5. We exhort, encourage, and admonish (1 Thess 2:11).

6. Our purpose is to keep one another from disunity and ensure the purity of the body.

The Church Discipline Process

The most prominent teaching on the formal steps of church discipline is described in Matthew 18:12–18. Beginning in verse 12, we see how important restoring the flock is. We leave the ninety-nine healthy ones to go get the strays.

1. Step #1: Private confrontation (Matt 18:15)

a) Legitimate sin and perceived legitimate "brother"

b) One-on-one; go to him alone, counsel with church leadership is advisable.

c) It is private because damage has not gone wider.

d) If he repents, you have won your brother.

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2. Step #2: Group confrontation (Matt 18:16)

a) Church leadership is definitely involved.

b) Two or three Christians are now addressing the sin and the lack of repentance.

c) Sin may or may not be seen wider; having additional witnesses brings weight on the event and that the previous one-on-one confrontation occurred without repentance.

d) The fact of the sin is confirmed in group setting. If the recipient is soft and penitent, you have the opportunity to win your brother back. How precious it is when a person softens after receiving the grace of a confrontation!

e) The recipient has greater opportunity for self-deception due to wider audience and potential to be defensive.

f) Often the recipient accuses the church of "ramping it up," but the charge is without merit. You are "ramping it up" because the person did not repent. The church is responding to the lack of repentance. God has a reaction to unrepentant sin.

g) Caution is communicated that the next step of the process is imminent. The church leaders must warn the unrepentant sinner that the two next steps are coming.

i) Since the sinner may not desire to meet with church leaders, often this process includes a written letter.

ii) Even if a meeting occurs, a letter is necessary to ensure protection in defamation cases against church leaders for church discipline.

iii) A church must have a process outlined, and they must consistently follow their process outline.

3. Step #3: If they fail to repent, tell it to the church (Matt 18:17).

a) The leadership of the church informs the corporate assembly. The whole church is now involved in the confrontation efforts. This is a public call to repentance.

b) If the unrepentant sinner refuses to repent, the person should be treated as a gentile and as a tax collector (v. 17). This is a shunning or a disfellowship within the body so that they know they are outside the people of God.

c) The unrepentant individual cannot enjoy intimate fellowship with God's people while living in unrepentant sin (Rom 16:17).

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d) The church cannot allow normal relations because of the threat of satanic deception broadening in the flock. Rebellious men and deceivers sent by Satan must be silenced because they upset whole families; reprove them severely (Titus 1:10–16).

4. Step #4: Public disfellowship (Matt 18:18)

a) There is power given to the church to make a public declaration in regards to unrepentant sin in the church. Christian fellowship is lost until they repent.

b) The church is informed that this specific person has refused to repent of a destructive life.

c) What is "bound" in church discipline is the earthly confirmation of what heaven is declaring. This does not allow the sinner to just join a neighboring church. The person is not responding to the loving call of the church to repent.

d) A communion service can be a fitting environment to announce church discipline.

i) A place and time for people to examine themselves (1 Cor 11:27–32).

ii) A time for people to be called to unity.

iii) A time for corporate and personal prayer.

Purposes of Corporate Church Discipline

1. It honors God. It is not an option, since church discipline is outlined throughout Scripture.

2. It protects the church.

a) Satan is always secretly introducing error and comes as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). We are vulnerable to his tactics and the weakness of the flesh.

b) The church discipline process is to protect the vulnerable, naïve, and immature persons in the church from an unrepentant sinner in rebellion against the truth (Gal 5:9; 1 Thess 5:14).

3. It vindicates the glory of Christ (primary purpose).

a) It vindicates the redemptive purposes of Christ: the integrity and ministry of Christ is upheld. Christ came to save and sanctify.

b) His bride (the church) must be protected.

c) The power and fruit of Christ's ministry is at stake.

4. It aims to reclaim offenders through their repentance.

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a) Express great concern for the sinner and warn of apostasy (Heb 6:4–8).

b) Aim to reclaim offenders (Matt 18:15; Gal 6:1). Don't be confused about biblical love. Love requires discipline (Prov 13:24; Heb 12:5–13).

5. It deters the church from sin.

a) After discipline was carried out by God in Acts 5 on Ananias and Sapphira, it says in verse 11, "great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things."

b) God's discipline did not destabilize the church; it stabilized it.

c) The church needs to know the seriousness of sin. There is a greater deterrent in the corporate setting than in the individual setting. Under formal leadership of pastors, there is a corporate accountability and the Spirit does some unique supernatural things in the corporate setting to convict believers of sin.

d) "Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning" (1 Tim 5:20).

6. It prevents the chastening of God on the local church.

a) Five churches were charged by Christ in Revelation 2 and 3.

b) False doctrine and immorality were tolerated, and then they were chided by Christ.

c) Without the process of discipline, we come under the chastening of God. So the purpose of church discipline is to prevent judgment and the removal of our lampstand (i.e., the loss of gospel effectiveness and influence).

Situational Church Discipline

1. Unrepentance

a) The key is not the sin; it is the unrepentance (Rev 2:14–21).

b) The key is the failure of the person to come under the biblical teaching and the Scriptural clarity after progressive levels of confrontation.

2. Heresy/False Teachers

a) All heresy that is soul threatening (Gal 1; 1 Tim 6:2–10, 20–21) must be removed from the church, urgently. Tolerating heresy allows a little leaven to ruin the whole lump of dough (Gal 5:9).

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b) "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned" (Titus 3:10–11; cf. 2 Pet 2:1–22).

c) Gospel-threatening doctrinal error (Rom 16:17; Jude 3) must be removed.

We do not discipline an error or disagreement of secondary or tertiary doctrines, as long as they come under the leadership of the church's doctrine and do not teach their contrary matters of conscience.

3. Unrepentant Adultery/Fornication

a) The *porneía* word group

b) Get the "so-called brother" out of the church (1 Cor 5:11).

c) If the sin was adultery, and the person has repented by leaving the relationship and going back to that person's spouse, then fruit of repentance is clearly seen. The unity and purity of the church is protected.

4. What about lust and pornography? What about gluttony, anger, unruly behavior, etc.? All unrepentant sin is a matter for discipline, but at what level and which steps are appropriate?

a) Holding to steps one and two may be sufficient when dealing with some sin.

b) The hinge point is the matter of the fruit of repentance and how much the sin threatens the unity and purity of the church.

c) Anger and gluttony are sins where weakness may take years to overcome in the power of the Spirit.

d) We must often pray for the Lord to bring clarity and conviction of sin. We may even pray for pain and suffering to bring about repentance.

d) If the sin is lust:

i) The *epithumía* word group indicates strong cravings.

ii) Sins of the mind, even pornography, are behind all sexual sins. But the Bible puts them in a different category (*epithumía*). They are not in the same category as fornication and adultery (*porneía*).

iii) These weaknesses often take longer repentance time, and more time is needed to see the fruit of repentance. Even in repentance there are weaknesses that need maturing.

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iv) There is a dynamic in the first and second step, where someone has a lust issue and is willing to work and failing a lot, bear with them and help them over time. It could potentially threaten the purity of the church over time if they do not deal with it, but time will make that clear.

v) Sins of the mind don't necessarily threaten the unity and purity of the church. Yet, over time secret sins may spill out as perversions in the church. Sins of the mind (known only by God and person) need the Lord's conviction for repentance; it is a supernatural work.

Questions to Anticipate

Should we distinguish between members and non-members?

No. The reason is due to the threat. The threat to the purity and the unity of the church is the same from a member and a non-member in unrepentant sin.

– There are onlookers in the church. They often try to avoid discipleship, discipline, and membership.

– There are fringe people in the church and are non-committed participants. You confront them and tell them "you can't bring that here." It may not be as formal a process.

– There are the not well-known people in the church who are longstanding attendees. With these people, you go through the formal process.

– There are factious or defiled people (1 Cor 5; Titus 3:10). These must go immediately. Legal action may come into effect.

How do I treat someone in my own family who might have been disciplined out of the church?

We don't cut off all communication with family; we don't ignore them. It may be an evangelism opportunity.

– At family functions, don't allow the offender to assume that all is well because of his life. Cordial interaction will happen, but acting as though no sin has been committed by continuing to have the same fellowship is not possible.

– If the opportunity arises, privately ask them, "Have you repented?"

What happens if someone gets disciplined out of the local church and they get restored somewhere else?

If it is true restoration, then the person would/should want to reconcile also with the previous church (2 Cor 7:9–11).

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Are defamation lawsuits a concern for the church?

Yes, but they are easier to defend when the disciplined person was a member and signed a corporate doctrinal statement. They agreed to a set of principles. Churches should have legal counsel and know their national and local laws to avoid exposure when carrying out church discipline.

Do we discipline teenagers living with their parents?

No. We will speak with a parent and call them to discipline their child.

– The teenager's spiritual position in the church has not yet been established, and he is under the spiritual care and authority of his parents.

– Once they are outside their parents' authority, church discipline is operative.

What if a member of the body does not want to attend church discipline services because they cannot handle the event?

People choosing this path are missing out on a couple very key components to their Christian life:

– It is a supernatural, corporate accountability and deterrent.

– It holds them accountable to bond with the body.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 14: DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

The study of divorce and remarriage is essential to develop firm convictions surrounding God's perfect design for marriages and families. In this study, both the Old Testament and the New Testament passages are examined to firmly plant the church within the biblical framework of marriage. God's people must have a thorough knowledge of the clear teaching in Scripture, since the one-man, one-woman design of marriage for life is clearly under attack in the culture.

Bible passages for study:

Gen 1:26–27; 5:2	Gen 2:24	Deut 24:1–5	Jer 3:6–1
Prov 2:16–17	Mal 2:13–16	Matt 5:31–32	Matt 19:3–9
Eph 5	1 Cor 7:7–16	1 Pet 3:7	

1. God hates divorce (Mal 2:16) because it violates the nature of the one-flesh, permanent, binding covenant between a man and a woman. Marriage was viewed as the most solemn arrangement between two human beings.

a) Proverbs 2:16–17

i) The path of the adulteress is the abandonment of her companion and forgetting the covenant she made before God.

ii) To divorce one's spouse puts him/her in opposition to God.

b) Romans 1:18–27

i) Man plunges into perversion by suppressing the truth.

ii) Man hates the original structure of marriage, which leads to perversion.

iii) The marriage relationship cannot be sustained without the gospel.

c) Malachi 2:13–16

i) Verse 13—They wanted God to excuse their deviation from His covenant design. They did not view marriage as God did, and they did not view its demise as He did. He does not accept their offering because they did not look at His covenant the way He does, and they are not repenting of their sin.

ii) Verse 14—They ask for the reason. The wife is a companion by covenant, but they dealt treacherously with her. God views the breaking of this covenant as treachery, and He refuses to accept the worship of His people.

iii) Verse 16—God hates divorce and the one who covers his wrong.

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iv) Worship will not be accepted if you deviate from God's design or if you do not agree with God and repent of the deviation.

(1) We see this same pattern of God not accepting worship in 1 Peter 3:7: "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

(2) God doesn't say He hates something that does not have massive consequences for His people. Divorce is gospel-disrupting.

2. Jesus doesn't treat divorce or marital perversions casually. In Matthew 5:27–32, Jesus speaks about the impurity of the heart that leads to destructive perversions of marriage.

a) Jesus says that if you are going to deal with the standards of righteousness you can't look just at the actions or outward evidence.

b) Adultery begins as a perversion of the heart. The self-righteous put a covering over their heart condition and acted as though they didn't pervert the marriage.

c) The heart condition is what makes you guilty before God. It is the heart, thoughts, and intentions that Christ examines.

d) Verses 29–30—Christ explains how severely you must treat that heart condition. He is saying that the lust of your heart will lead you to eternal damnation. It is that serious; it will blind you and send you to eternity without Christ!

e) Verses 31–32—Jesus is teaching in this passage the heart of divorce, which is adultery. (This passage does not teach all of the nuances of divorce and remarriage.)

i) This passage has often been used incorrectly by the church to keep people in a state of singleness. One would have to ignore 1 Corinthians 7 to hold the view that remarriage was not possible. In that case Paul himself would have been violating Christ's teaching with his teaching.

ii) Verse 31—The perpetrator/guilty/offender is the one desiring the divorce without biblical cause or justification. Christ cites Deuteronomy 24 to show that adultery is at the heart of divorce and a violation of God's design for marriage.

iii) In those days, the Jews were giving certificates of divorce to those who appeared righteous. Their desire was not to end the marriage because of sexual sin on the part of their spouse. Instead, one party wanted out because of lust.

iv) The Jews' perversions included almost any reason for divorce. The only clause in the law from Deuteronomy 24 was for impurity, sexual sin.

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v) In this passage, the perpetrator makes her an adulterer because he wants out of the marriage. His lust or his offense makes him the initiator.

vi) Verse 32—Jesus' point is not that the innocent party cannot ever remarry.

vii) Deuteronomy 24 is clear: the perpetrator or offender causing the divorce is the one who is stained and not permitted to be remarried.

3. In Matthew 19:1–9 Jesus is being challenged and tested by the Pharisees.

a) Verse 3—Jesus dealt with the Pharisees who were trying to make their own rules and regulations. The Pharisees are testing Jesus to catch Him in a nuanced violation of the Law, an inconsistency.

b) Verses 4–5—Christ creates a framework to teach by tracing marriage back to God's original and perfect design by from Genesis 1:26–27; 2:24; 5:2.

i) Scripture is clear that man leaves father and mother for a godly marriage, not for a perversion of God's design.

ii) The design is rooted in how God created them, male and female. This is also the greatest argument against homosexual relationships and same sex marriage.

c) Verse 6—The design of the family has the man leaving and cleaving in a one-flesh union; there is no other design for the family. This is the groundwork laid by Jesus before answering the question from the Pharisees.

d) Verse 7—The Pharisees think they have trapped Jesus by bringing up Moses, the patriarch of the Law. Is Christ going to wrangle with Moses from Deuteronomy 24:1–4? Christ shows them very quickly that God does not excuse the one who violates the one-flesh union.

e) Verse 8—Jesus says, "From the beginning it has not been this way."

i) He reminded them that God allowed divorce for the Israelites because of their hardness of heart, because of their sin.

ii) Divorce is not a loophole: one person is going to harden the heart and the other person is going to be left unprotected.

f) Verse 9—Jesus provides a clear statement about immorality (*porneía*). This word meant any sexual relations outside of the one-flesh union. It is not lust or cravings.

g) Lust leads to sexual sin, as Christ states in Matthew 5:28.

i) Jesus teaches that the sin begins in the heart (i.e., heart adultery).

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ii) Adultery in the mind is not the same or has the same consequences as physical adultery.

iii) Lust in the heart is still sin and should be properly confessed and dealt with at that level.

First Biblical Ground for Divorce: Immorality

Divorce is permitted for the unprotected spouse who wants to stay in the one-flesh union, but cannot due to acts of *porneía* by the guilty or unrepentant spouse.

1. While the text does not specifically say, "unrepentant *porneía*," the implication is there. Someone is separating the one-flesh design, since they are unwilling to repent.

2. One partner wants to end the marriage, and they are proving it with their infidelity/sexual sin. The innocent, non-offending spouse is the one who wants to maintain the one-flesh union.

3. Christ establishes the first exception clause to protect the innocent person who cannot fulfill his/her marriage vow and keep the marriage pure. The exception clause is also a consequence to the one who has violated the vow. The sin of adultery has very specific evidence of repentance. The sinful relationship is given up and the person returns to the marriage permanently.

Second Biblical Ground for Divorce: Abandonment

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul addresses different circumstances of marriage. He addresses situations between believers and unbelievers and abandonment (and abuse by consequence).

1. Verses 10–11—Paul reiterated what Jesus taught. The perpetrator or offender must remain unmarried. This passage doesn't intend to address every possible situation.

a) There are individual situations that pastors have to reconcile with Scripture.

b) The general principle is that the preferable path is confession, repentance, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

2. Verse 12—"I say, not the Lord." Paul is saying, *Don't search previous Scripture for this, but as an apostle, I say with authority the following.*

3. Verses 12–16—Paul begins to address situations where people are married to unbelievers.

a) The unbeliever is set apart for special grace into a marriage dynamic with a believer. The power of the Spirit of God and His grace enter the home. One believer in a family is better than no believer, generationally. (That's why he mentions the children who are all set apart, sanctified and holy.)

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b) Verse 15—Unbelievers do not care about biblical controls, so they are not bound to that vow. Don't fear. The believer is free, and we are called to peace. Paul removes the stigma that they are still bound to former spouse.

c) Verse 16—They should try to keep the marriage intact and reconcile, but he is clearing their conscience when the unbeliever abandons the marriage. You will not "save" your spouse. Do not go to war in the home to stay married.

d) Abuse in a marriage has a clear connection to peace in verse 15 and illustrates that the spouse doesn't care about the marriage. The crime of assault communicates loudly that they don't want a peaceful, biblical marriage. Unrepentant abuse has the same effect as abandonment. By their actions, perpetrators do not want to be married.

The two biblical grounds for divorce create a special protection for the one who honors the marriage covenantal vows and a special consequence for the one who perpetrates the offense. These are the only two grounds given to us by the Bible for divorce:

1. Unrepentant sexual sin/physical adultery

2. Abandonment, including abuse, by an unbelieving spouse

We learn that even though God allows divorce, violating God's plan often results in a mess for both the innocent and offender. We need to keep in mind, that divorce is not God's original plan; it is a perversion of His design. It is part of God's providential workings to show His people that a violation of His design has massive consequences which often affects generations.

Questions to Anticipate

– *Could Matthew 19 be speaking of betrothal and not marriage?*

– *Does adultery require the demise of the marriage?*

– *What is the evidence of repentance from* porneía*?* Further study of Titus 1:15–16 and questioning salvation may be in order.

– *What if the innocent party demands a divorce even when the offender is repentant?* Teach what the Bible says about forgiveness. If the innocent spouse is truly innocent, after examining the biblical text, he or she likely will want to honor the Lord and avoid the negative consequences of divorce.

– Expect questions about messy divorces and remarriage prior to people coming to Christ.

Suggested Resources

– Gordon J. Wenham, William A. Heth, Craig S. Keener, *Remarriage After Divorce in Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

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– Jay E. Adams, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980).

– William A. Heth, "Jesus on Divorce: How My Mind Has Changed" (article available online).

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 15: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The feminist movement has assaulted biblical values for women, and the result has been a revolution in our time. We believe that God's Word is authoritative and inerrant, and that it has a clear message for women today. Only the Bible can offer the true solution to the chaos and confusion that confronts today's women.

Bible passages for study:

Gen 1:26–31	Gen 2:7–25	Gen 3:16–19	Judg 4
Isa 3:12	Luke 8:1–3	Matt 13:33; 22:1–2	Matt 24:41
Luke 15:8–10	John 4:7–26	Luke 13:10	Mark 5:25
Gal 3:28	Eph 5:22	Col 3:18	Titus 2:5
1 Tim 2:9–15	1 Pet 3:1		

1. Women in the Old Testament

a) Equality (Gen 1:26–31)

i) Both men and women were created equal in the image of God (v. 27).

ii) Neither one received more of the image of God than the other.

b) Distinctiveness (Gen 2:7–25)

i) Both men and women had differences in their God-given functions and responsibilities.

ii) Eve was created after Adam for the specific purpose of being his helper (v. 18).

iii) The word "helper" describes someone in a relationship of service to another.

iv) Eve was equal to Adam, but she was given the role and duty of submitting to him.

v) Therefore, the responsibility of wives to submit to their husbands has always been part of God's plan from creation.

vi) It was God's plan even before sin and the curse enters in chapter 3.

c) The fall (Gen 3:16–19)

i) Both Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's command resulted in different consequences.

ii) For the woman, pain in childbirth and child nurturing is multiplied (v. 16).

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iii) The word "desire" in verse 16 can be interpreted:

(1) in a negative way (i.e., she would be tempted to usurp his authority), or

(2) in a positive way (i.e., that she would continue to desire his companionship).

iv) The meaning of this word cannot be imported from Genesis 4:7. Therefore, it should be interpreted in its own context.

v) Eve's usurping of Adam's authority was already present, after sin entered. She stepped outside of her bounds and blameshifted.

vi) The best interpretation is the positive. Her curse is on motherhood, not on marriage. Therefore, in spite of the pain, God's grace abounds and His original design remains: she continues to desire her husband's companionship and her husband continues to be her leader.

d) Women who ruled in Israel

i) Deborah in Judges 4 was an exception and not the rule.

ii) There were no women

(1) with an ongoing prophetic ministry.

(2) in a priestly role.

(3) who ruled as queen over the nation of Israel.

(4) who authored any Scripture in the Old Testament (or the New Testament for that matter).

iii) Isaiah 3:12 indicates that God allowed women to rule for some time to dispense judgment over a sinning nation that was trying to go against God's plan.

2. Women in the New Testament

a) What did Jesus teach about women?

i) Jesus never took the position that women, by their nature, could not understand spiritual or theological truth.

ii) He included them in His audience and following (Luke 8:1–3).

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iii) He used images and illustrations in His teachings that they would better understand (Matt 13:33; 22:1–2; 24:41; Luke 15:8–10).

iv) He revealed that He was the Messiah to the Samaritan woman and taught her about eternal life and true worship (John 4:7–26).

v) He touched them and allowed them to touch Him, so that they would be healed (Mark 5:25; Luke 13:10).

vi) He demonstrated their equality with men, but at the same time, He did not exalt them to a place of leadership over men.

b) What did the Epistles teach about women?

i) Principles of equality and submission for women were highlighted side by side.

ii) The way of salvation for both and women is the same (Gal 3:28).

iii) They are members of equal standing in the body of Christ just like men.

3. Women within the family

a) Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18

i) A wife's submission to her husband reflects her obedience "as to the Lord," who has sanctioned the marriage contract.

ii) A wife's submission to her husband must be "fitting in the Lord," meaning proper and becoming.

b) Titus 2:5—If a wife ignores or neglects these commands, the gospel will be maligned, criticized, and discredited by unbelievers.

c) 1 Peter 3:1

i) A wife's lack of submission disrupts the power of the gospel to work in the heart of her unbelieving husband.

ii) This voluntary submission of one equal to another (a woman to a man) is an expression of love for God and a desire to follow His design as revealed in His Word.

4. Women within the church

a) Responsibilities of women in 1 Timothy 2:9–15

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i) Verse 9—The appearance of a Christian woman should attract attention to her godly character, not to her clothing.

ii) Verse 9b—The attitude of a Christian woman should be an attitude of shame at the idea of inciting lust or being a distraction from worship.

iii) Verse 10—The testimony of a Christian woman who has made a public profession about her commitment to the Lord should conduct herself in a manner consistent with it.

iv) Verse 11—The reason for a Christian woman's silence has nothing to do with her physiological makeup or intellectual capabilities. She is not to teach because God's Law forbids it (1 Cor 11:3; 14:34; cf. Gen 3:16).

b) Restrictions for women in 1 Timothy 2:9–15

i) Background:

(1) The culture in Ephesus shows that women were looked upon as second-class citizens. They were allowed to attend worship but were discouraged to learn. So they ended up overreacting to their oppression and sought to go beyond their freedom to gain dominance over men.

(2) However, the restrictions in verse 12 are not based on the cultural or specific conditions which pertained only to Ephesus or the first century, but they go beyond because they are based on the created order (v. 13).

ii) Specific Restrictions:

(1) A woman is not to teach men (v. 12a).

(2) A woman is not to exercise authority over men (v. 12b).

(3) Paul was instructing Timothy concerning the public worship of the church. His instruction is simple: whenever men and women are gathered together to worship the Lord, women are not to teach men or to exercise authority over them.

c) Consequences of women disobeying 1 Timothy 2:9–15

i) The authority of God's Word is diminished.

ii) When God's Word is disobeyed, God is dishonored.

iii) Both men and women will be confused about their roles.

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iv) The family will become weak in its gospel influence.

v) The church will become ineffective in her gospel mission.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 16: GODLY BALANCE FOR MUSIC AND WORSHIP MINISTRIES

The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of biblical principles for music in corporate worship. It covers the purpose of music in the church, as well as practical applications rooted in wise and loving shepherding of the congregation.

Bible passages for study:

Ps 45:1	Ps 103:1	Ps 51:17	Rom 1:9
Ps 27:6	Jas 5:13	Ps 32:7	Eph 5:18–19
Ps 40:3	Rom 12:1	Acts 17:28	John 4:24
Eph 5:18–19	Col 3:16	Rev 5:9	1 Cor 14:26
1 Cor 4:6	Heb 12:28–29	Titus 2:4–5	1 John 2:12–14
Eph 4:11–16			

What Is Biblical Worship?

1. Worship is the perpetual expression of the heart and life toward God. Throughout Scripture, there are a number of words that, taken together, provide a multifaceted picture of what worship is. It encompasses many aspects: submission, reverence, thankfulness, awe, and service. Worship is holistic; it involves the intellect, emotions, and will (Pss 45:1; 103:1; 51:17; Rom 1:9).

2. The purpose of music in worship

a) Musical worship will ascribe worth to God (Ps 27:6).

b) Musical worship will stir the emotions, lifting them toward God (Jas 5:13).

c) Musical worship provides us with a memorable, powerful means of learning systematic doctrine through hymns (Ps 32:7; Eph 5:18–19).

d) Musical worship will proclaim truth to the lost (Ps 40:3).

e) Music is not an end, but a means to an end, which is the worship of God. Music itself is never the objective, nor is it the measure of worship.

3. Essential presuppositions underlying music and worship ministry

a) The authority of Scripture: Some use the term "regulative principle" to mean that we confine our corporate worship practices to specific formats (and sometimes cultural norms) that are described in Scripture. But more broadly, it's helpful to think of the regulative principle as a matter of Scripture's authority. We derive our practices from and measure their success by the testimony of Scripture itself.

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b) Whole-life worship (John 4:24; Acts 17:28; Rom 12:1): Although they can be useful shorthand, terms like "worship leader" or describing music as "a time of worship" can be unhelpful; they suggest that worship is limited to music in the corporate assembly, when Scripture describes worship as holistic.

c) Music and Scripture as an ordained marriage (Eph 5:18–19; Col 3:16; Rev 5:9): We sing because God sings (Zeph 3:17) and because He commands us to sing as well. Our corporate singing weds the sanctifying truth of Scripture with the affective power of music.

Six Guiding Principles for Music and Worship Ministry

1. Promote content-driven worship.

a) The Spirit-controlled believer is richly indwelt by the Word of Christ (Col 3:16).

b) Meditation on truth promotes a godly lifestyle that honors the Lord.

c) Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs: if the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly means that we will sing, it follows that what we sing should be filled with Scripture.

d) Scriptural content will engage the mind and will be far more enduring than human expressions of devotion that are without explicit Scriptural basis.

2. Do everything for edification.

a) 1 Corinthians 14:26—Corporate edification trumps personal preference. We defer to one another in love (Phil 2:3–4).

b) Corporate worship is not about what we can get, but what we can give. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve … " (Matt 20:28).

c) Some musical styles may be more helpful to edify the body of Christ than other styles. While the textual content itself should be straightforward to examine, matters of style are more difficult and require great wisdom and cultural awareness.

d) Every aspect of the service should be orderly, not chaotic (1 Cor 14:40).

3. Avoid confusing associations with the world.

a) Preferences regarding musical style should not be elevated to a position of scriptural authority (1 Cor 4:6). Believers are commanded to train their consciences and to grow in wisdom and understanding.

b) However, we need to acknowledge that music is powerful.

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i) Learned, cultural associations to certain styles of genres are unavoidable. It's naïve and irresponsible (and unloving) to ignore them in the corporate dynamic.

ii) Often, music naturally evokes a physical response.

iii) Choose and use music that evokes right, God-honoring responses like reverence, celebration, humility, right formality, and exultant joy.

c) Musical choices require biblical clarity, maturity, and prayer.

d) Define what is appropriate based on the congregation, the culture, and the resources available to your church body.

e) Pursue a moderate middle that reflects a balance between the different backgrounds and cultures represented in the congregation. A desire to be "edgy" displays immaturity and recklessness towards the care of the congregation.

f) Do not offend your brother or sister. Don't be insensitive to someone else's conscience.

4. Show reverence in corporate worship. Respect, awe, and honor are whole-life attributes (Heb 12:28–29). "God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few" (Eccl 5:2).

5. Include the mature and elderly in the life of the church (Titus 2:4–5; 1 John 2:12–14). Don't limit the age range of your church by strictly adhering to a musical sub-genre.

"Because the biblical command is for God's people to sing, choose songs with musical construction that is conducive to congregational singing, not popular soloist-oriented singing."

Four Weaknesses to Avoid

1. Avoid lyrics of dubious quality.

a) In the past hymns were usually written not by musicians, but by theologians and pastors.

b) Modern lyrics are often sentimentalized, shallow, and man-centered. Frequently they utilize expressions that have no biblical basis.

c) We must always ask: does the song communicate truth in the way God intended?

2. Avoid emotion-driven worship instead of emotion-filled worship.

a) Emotion is a gift, but it's not the end goal.

b) As leaders, we must de-emphasize the "worship experience" as a metric for success. The true expression of worship is the submission of the heart by faith to God's truth—and this

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cannot ultimately be assessed merely by external observation (or even by a self-examination of our emotions).

3. Avoid catering to cultural trends and pragmatic interests.

a) A right desire for evangelism must not lead to tampering with God's design. God's Spirit, working through the Word, is the real "worship leader." Music does not bring people into the presence of God, nor does it do what only the Spirit can do.

b) Ephesians 4:11–16—The church meets to praise God, pray, fellowship, edify one another, be equipped with doctrine, and prepare for evangelism.

c) Unbelievers are welcome guests, but they are not participants, and they are not the object of programming in the corporate worship.

4. Avoid emphasizing form over substance.

a) Yes, excellence and preparation matter, but …

b) Musical excellence for its own sake, without humility and eternal focus, leads to pride and conceit.

c) Culture and styles will change, but unchanging truth needs to be emphasized.

d) "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (1 Cor 4:2)—not creative. Although creativity has a place in corporate worship, it must be carefully kept in its right place and never elevated above the need for edification and faithfulness.

Practical Tips for a "Blended Worship Service"

1. Use both traditional and contemporary elements.

a) There is excellent material from both the old and the new—and much from both that should be discarded.

b) Discernment requires maturity in the musicians and the congregation.

2. Teach the importance of historical hymnology.

a) Consider the benefits of using old hymns:

i) Teaches thrilling theology of profound depth and precision

ii) Cultivates an appreciation for the past legacy of godliness

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iii) Creates a bridge between old and young in the congregation

iv) Maintains a certain level of familiarity

b) Suggestions for using old hymns

i) Some hymn tunes may be re-written, but many are excellent in their original form and can often be modernized while preserving the familiar tune and rhythm.

ii) Consider instrumentation. Some modern instruments may not be ideal for older hymns.

iii) If an old hymn is sung to a modern tune, consider adding a traditional verse or chorus as a bridge to what is familiar.

c) Disadvantages of eliminating older hymns

i) Profound depth is often missing from contemporary lyrics.

ii) A church that uses only contemporary music tends to lose its classically-trained musicians and will become musically and stylistically one-dimensional.

3. Use good contemporary music.

a) Benefits of using contemporary hymns and praise music:

i) Many modern songs consist of direct praise or prayer to God.

ii) Allows the modern generation to use its musical and lyrical talents

iii) Creates a bridge from the older saints to the younger

iv) Challenges the body of Christ to think deeply and carefully about theology

b) Evaluating contemporary hymns and songs

i) Must be God-centered, not man-centered

ii) Must convey truth with accuracy and clarity

iii) Should reflect a creativity that evidences the fruit of the Spirit

iv) Should communicate high spiritual ideals and thoughts

v) Should evoke a wholesome response toward holiness and eternal things

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vi) Should enhance the pulpit ministry but never overshadow it

vii) Should never allow style to have mastery over substance

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 17: CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 1: The Principle of Imitation in the Church

In this session we will see how servants of Christ mature in a pattern. Our Christian walk includes a command in Scripture to mimic, or pattern, our lives after those around us who are more mature and sanctified. We will see that Paul commanded this of the Corinthians. We will also learn that our ultimate model is Christ.

Bible passages for study:

1 Cor 4:14–16	Phil 3:17	Rom 1:12	1 Cor 11:1
Heb 5:11; 13:7	2 Tim 3:16–17	Eph 5:21	Ps 96

The Command to Imitate Godly Examples

1. In 1 Corinthians 4 and Philippians 3 the apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians as children, co-heirs with Christ, and members of His church.

a) Paul instructed them, saying, "be imitators of me" (1 Cor 4:16; cf. Heb 13:7).

– The word group (*mimētḗs*) means to "mimic."

b) To the Philippians Paul wrote, "observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us" (Phil 3:17). This is the concept of replication.

i) The word group (*túpos*) means a "model, example, or type."

ii) This is collective and corporate: "Brethren, join in following"—we don't do it in an isolated fashion.

iii) You will never understand serving the church in leadership if you live the Christian life separate and alone on a metaphorical island.

iv) You will not grow unless you have someone pressing into your life.

c) The implicit emphasis is on observing. We watch the mature to learn the pattern.

i) We observe how they think.

ii) We observe how they apply the truth.

iii) We observe how they battle sin.

iv) We observe how they speak, listen, study, and learn.

v) We observe the way they articulate the truth regarding the heart and the mind.

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vi) This is not just a casual observation; it is a close study of the application of biblical principles which have formed lasting convictions in a person's life.

(1) We observe the Christlike principles in a man's life, and we aim to discover how he came to model Christ from the Scriptures.

(2) We examine carefully how those principles worked down so deep so that they firmly hold to their convictions.

(3) How did that passage, applied in that way, lead that man to be that kind of husband, father, shepherd, and man at work?

(4) If I can trace that man's example and convictions back to Christ and His word, I am no longer blind. The light of the gospel as it pertains to that area in my life is available to me.

vii) Disciples should trace the pattern of a more mature believer's life and follow it by placing themselves in that pattern.

2. When Paul says to mimic him, he doesn't mean:

a) to follow men's practical choices or preferences (e.g., this is how to clean your garage).

b) cloning in every area (e.g., food, clothing, interests, etc.).

c) a mechanism for control.

3. When Paul says to mimic him, he does mean:

a) to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1).

i) He connects this mimicking to the wonderful redemption that we have in Christ.

ii) We imitate the divine in our salvation.

b) to imitate anything in his life that is Christological, from God's Word, or divine.

4. Stumbling blocks to imitation

a) We don't carefully observe other men.

i) This work implies a lot more than just observing outward deeds.

ii) It requires a depth of friendship and discipleship that discusses true heart work.

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b) We converse only superficially.

i) We must ask critical questions.

ii) We must converse about deep things, and why we do the things we do.

c) We tend to avoid closeness with other men.

d) Men are prone to put on airs, as if we don't have much to learn.

– The apostle Paul said that he longed to be with the Romans for mutual encouragement in the faith (Rom 1:12). We are encouraged and we learn from each other.

e) We make assumptions about the way people live, and our prejudices get in the way.

i) We are biased, not objective, and we don't properly see the things we should imitate.

(1) They live that way because they _____ [an assumption on our part].

(2) I am not like them because "I'm different" [an assumption on our part].

(3) We make assumptions that our lives are more difficult or their spiritual lives are easier.

ii) Paul commands us to mimic the pattern (1 Cor 4:16) without making assumptions of the pattern observed.

iii) It requires getting past biases and not making assumptions based on biases.

f) We are intimidated by the examples of others.

i) When we press into others' lives, we feel inadequate. Good! Embrace it!

(1) Our pride makes us feel uncomfortable.

(2) We don't really want to imitate when we don't want to be exposed as less spiritual or weak.

(3) We start to make excuses.

ii) But when we are intimidated, that is precisely when we are called by God to be challenged, to press in, observe the intimidating pattern, learn from it, and model it.

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(1) We assume and think that we are okay where we are, and that things are not going to go poorly for us if we hold onto the status quo.

(2) We must be confronted for change and growth.

(3) We must be stretched outside of our comfort zone.

(4) We are either growing or falling backwards; there is no status quo because of the unredeemed flesh and Satan's relentless pursuit to tear us down.

(5) If you are comfortable with the status quo, you will become systematically less mature and dull of hearing (Heb 5:11).

5. What does the structure of imitation look like?

a) God calls the mature to be visible with tested patterns to follow.

i) They are affirmed in character and skilled with applying the principles in God's Word.

ii) They are named pastors, elders, deacons, etc. All are affirmed and tested.

iii) Before they are in leadership, they are serving as examples, and their example is well-known.

iv) The mature are not invincible or perfect; they are simply striving to be Christlike. We follow their humility and pliability.

b) The principle of imitation affirms the calling of God to the offices of church leadership (1 Tim 3:1)

i) He desires to lead as a model and have others follow his example.

ii) God has placed a burden on his heart to lead by example and for others to imitate him.

iii) He desires to be a shepherd and lead.

iv) He buckles down, disciplines himself for the purpose of godliness, and he learns.

v) He is humble and contrite, doing the hard work on his own heart as he follows the mature examples above him.

vi) Then, after he is tested, he is affirmed as an overseer.

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c) As the congregation imitates the leaders, a pool of men is being developed. From this pool, God calls future leaders.

i) Some may be called to full-time ministry. It works only because of the principle of imitation.

ii) Strong churches result as no one is left out of this command.

iii) Discipleship can be clunky and hindered if imitation is not practiced or the models to follow are not godly.

iv) The flock should be more like Christ as a result, or the shepherd must get out of that leadership role.

(1) We would protect the church better if men would not go into ministry until this principle has been imbedded in their souls.

(2) Men who realize they are not a man to be modeled after would get out of ministry.

Implications of Biblical Imitation in the Church

1. The practice of imitation is amazingly purifying for the one being mimicked.

a) The example doesn't begin and end with me.

b) I don't get to be comfortable just because I may be ten steps ahead in maturity; the benchmark is Christ!

c) The mature fall short, so we are purified in that as others mimic us. We strive even more.

2. Ministries that implement imitation will be used by God for powerful gospel transformation.

a) Growth is not a flash in the pan; instead it is slow and steady in maturing, and it cures in obedience.

b) God is preparing people right now somewhere, so later they can be saved and discipled when they come into your life to follow your example.

c) The hardest work in the church is modeling and following examples.

i) This is our strategic plan for church growth.

ii) If the leadership is godly and the trickle-down effect is more godliness, then we know God will bring others to our ministry.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 17: CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 2: Elder Character Mandates

In this session, we will examine the convictions and character mandates that are necessary for men who enter the office of overseer in the church. The highest priority is the godliness of an elder's life and his handling of God's Word for God's people. This requires great care, seriousness, and sobriety. Overseers are elders and pastors with a responsibility for leading the church. Graciously, God gave us specific mandates for overseers in Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, as well as his letters to the church in Thessalonica. It is absolutely critical that we work hard and pay attention to these things. The scattering of shepherds harms God's people, and Satan knows it.

Bible passages for study:

1 Cor 11:1	Phil 3:17	1 Tim 3:1ff.	Prov 6:23
Titus 1	Prov 5–7	Prov 6:32–33	Eph 5
1 Pet 3:7	1 Thess 4:1–8	1 Cor 13:5	Rom 12:1–2
Rom 15:1–2	Phil 2:3		

1. The standard for the overseer is firm and established in the Holy Scriptures.

    a) The office of overseer is a fine work (1 Tim 3:1).

    b) This is not a man interviewing for a secular job.

        i) He desires to be a shepherd to see God's people advance. It is a burden on his heart, so he buckles down to become an unashamed workman with God's Word.

        ii) He is willing to be tested by other leaders and shepherds who will affirm him as an overseer by the men who went before him.

        iii) The giftedness of an overseer (or a calling from God) includes:

            (1) a burden.

            (2) learning the skill.

            (3) testing.

            (4) proven character.

            (5) affirmation.

2. Blamelessness is a calling for all men in the church.

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a) Elders are required to be above reproach as examples (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6–7), but all men in the church must aspire to be blameless and reach for the same standard by imitation (Phil 3:17).

b) If we are living by the same mandates, we will notice if a shepherd wanders.

c) If elders go rogue, it is up to the congregation to notice it and step in.

d) If they refuse to repent, it is the congregation that must remove those men and affirm others.

e) If the men of the church strive in these things, the church will be healthy, even if some elder fails.

3. First Timothy 3:1ff. provides the qualifications for overseers.

Paul never says the man must be an organizer or strategic planner. He is not called because he is a natural communicator or has certain human relations skills. He is not called because he is a visionary leader, glib, Type A personality, or any of the things a leadership book will tell you is needed in order to build a business. Paul goes to the heart: he is concerned with a man's character. Men can be disqualified as leaders if they do not remain faithful. Satan loves to tear apart a ministry from the top down.

a) An overseer must be above reproach (1 Tim 3:2).

i) He must be above legitimate question as to the patterns of his life.

ii) An easy way to remember this term "above reproach" is:

(1) Blameless; not perfect or flawless

(2) Blameless means he is above legitimate question.

(3) He cannot be held as a man who has a pattern of ignoring something sinful in his life.

iii) He is unreproveable because of neglect or hypocrisy in his life.

(1) Spiritual neglect will exasperate our children and the church.

– He will always be teaching and shepherding those in his care.

– His own sanctification is on display, and he is not neglecting it.

– He is teaching his children, his wife, and those in his care.

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– He must be seen striving and gaining victory.

– He must be striving in the Word of God, faithfully applying it to his heart.

– It is not a person without sin struggles, he battles just like the flock. He knows the schemes of Satan.

– He knows how to use the weapons of Ephesians 6.

– Having battled, he has a pattern of victory by the Spirit.

– He can show others where to put their feet to also walk in a pattern of victory.

– He is not better than the flock or intrinsically more pleasing to God, he is just more mature in his walk.

– He prays; he is dependent.

b) An overseer must be devoted to his spouse/blameless in marriage (1 Tim 3:2b).

If you are not yet married, this passage is absolutely critical for you today. Every pattern you follow today will be taken into your married life.

i) The language here is on devotion; singular/exclusive devotion (cf. Prov 5).

ii) In every way of their companionship, the man of God must be devoted to his wife.

iii) It should be obvious by the way you interact with her and with others that you cannot be held accountable to a pattern of wandering or coveting other things.

– Coveting another spouse is the most grievous sin.

– Adultery by an elder is a permanent disqualification from ministry. (Proverbs 6:32–33 is an implicit warning.)

iv) We don't covet because we know the sobriety and sacredness of marriage (cf. Prov 5–7, Song; Eph 5:25–33; 1 Thess 4:1–8; 1 Pet 3:7).

– Coveting is ridiculous when considering that we model Christ and His relationship to the church. Christ gave me this wife. He doesn't make mistakes.

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– Christ never wants another.

– Christ always does what the Father ordains.

– The Father chose the elect, and the elect are those upon whom Christ sets His affection.

v) We want to be above legitimate question because we do not covet outside of our marriage.

vi) Where the heart is tempted to do that, we go to war against the temptation with the power of the Holy Spirit to protect the exclusive devotion.

c) An overseer must be temperate, prudent, respectable (1 Tim 3:2c).

i) Temperate: not given to excesses

– This is often applied to worldly substances.

– An elder must have an inner strength and an inner regulation by precept from God's Word.

– He is careful and controls his passions.

ii) Prudent: well-disciplined thoughts

– Has wisdom by applying truth with nuance in individual situations.

– He is a steady thinker. He applies truth.

– He brings biblical principles to bear on life's circumstances with foresight on their longer-term impact.

iii) Respectable: worthy of imitation; illustrates a pattern to be followed

– Good, steady, upright behavior; he is dignified.

– He is disciplined. He is not disheveled, lazy, or immature.

– He lives his life with spiritual altitude.

d) An overseer must be hospitable (1 Tim 3:2d).

i) He unselfishly serves and loves strangers and people in the body he doesn't know well.

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ii) He doesn't gravitate toward those around whom he is more comfortable, those who are obedient and soft to the truth. He is deeply concerned about those who need ministry.

iii) When strangers who profess Christ come into the church, the people should reflect the leaders and greet them with open arms.

e) An overseer must be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2e; cf. 2 Tim 2:24).

i) He is as student of the truth, having a working knowledge of it.

ii) He understands it, believes it, meditates on it, and memorizes it.

iii) He is immersed in the categories of theology and doctrine.

iv) He understands how to defend the faith (cf. Titus 1:9).

v) He has a practical ministry which helps others understand and obey the truth.

f) An overseer must not be addicted to wine (1 Tim 3:3a).

i) He is not one who consumes and abuses the things which would disrupt how the Holy Spirit controls his life (cf. Eph 5:18).

ii) He is not numbed by any substances.

g) An overseer must not be pugnacious (1 Tim 3:3b).

– He is not a bully who spoils for an argument, wanting to win at all cost.

h) An overseer must be gentle (1 Tim 3:3c).

i) His behavior and manner is fitting, moderate, and equitable.

ii) He is seasoned in responding wisely to trouble.

i) An overseer must be peaceable (1 Tim 3:3d).

– He is uncontentious, not given to stirring up strife (cf. Jas 3:17).

j) An overseer must be free from the love of money (1 Tim 3:3e).

i) He isn't greedy.

ii) He doesn't minister out of a desire for material gain.

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iii) He puts himself at the disposal of the church. (The church should support its pastors, but that's not the reason they do ministry.)

k) An overseer must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (1 Tim 3:4–5).

i) He must lead his own family.

ii) In doing so, he understands how leading his own family will help him lead the flock with love and encouragement.

l) An overseer must not be a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil (1 Tim 3:6).

i) He must not love power and prestige, due to immaturity in the Lord. The young are so prone to conceit.

ii) The church tends to love new teachers and elevate them too quickly.

iii) If he does not deal with conceit, Satan will exploit the weak link and hurt the church.

m) An overseer must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

i) The world is going to hate what he says.

ii) But the world cannot make a legitimate accusation against his character.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 17: CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 3: Shepherding Mandates

In this study,[1] we will survey the two epistles from Paul to Timothy. Paul outlines a ministry philosophy of the work of a shepherd. These very things challenge the prevailing practice of ministry today in mainstream evangelicalism. However, we must let the Scriptures instruct our ministry philosophy and resist the temptation to follow an unbiblical path.

Bible passages for study:

1 Tim 2 Tim

Paul instructed Timothy in the first epistle that he must:

1. Correct those teaching false doctrine and call them to a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith (1 Tim 1:3–5).

2. Fight for divine truth and for God's purposes, keeping his own faith and a good conscience (1 Tim 1:18–19).

3. Pray for the lost and lead the men of the church to do the same (1 Tim 2:1–8).

4. Call women in the church to fulfill their God-given role of submission and to raise up godly children, setting an example of faith, love, and sanctity with self-restraint (1 Tim 2:9–15).

5. Carefully select spiritual leaders for the church on the basis of their giftedness, godliness, and virtue (1 Tim 3:1–13).

6. Recognize the source of error and those who teach it, and point out these things to the rest of the church (1 Tim 4:1–6).

7. Constantly be nourished on the words of Scripture and its sound teaching, avoiding all myths and false doctrines (1 Tim 4:6).

8. Discipline himself for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim 4:7–11).

9. Boldly command and teach the truth of God's Word (1 Tim 4:12).

10. Be a model of spiritual virtue that all can follow (1 Tim 4:12).

11. Faithfully read, explain, and apply the Scriptures publicly (1 Tim 4:13–14).

12. Be progressing toward Christlikeness in his own life (1 Tim 4:15–16).

[1] Adapted from John MacArthur, "What Is a Pastor to Be and Do?" in John MacArthur and The Master's Seminary Faculty, *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 25–26.

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13. Be gracious and gentle in confronting the sin of his people (1 Tim 5:1–2).

14. Give special consideration and care to those who are widows (1 Tim 5:3–16).

15. Honor faithful church leaders who work hard (1 Tim 5:17–21).

16. Choose church leaders with great care, seeing to it that they are both mature and proven (1 Tim 5:22).

17. Take care of his physical condition so he is strong to serve (1 Tim 5:23).

18. Teach and preach principles of true godliness, helping his people discern between true godliness and mere hypocrisy (1 Tim 5:24–6:6).

19. Flee the love of money (1 Tim 6:7–11).

20. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness (1 Tim 6:11).

21. Fight for the faith against all enemies and all attacks (1 Tim 6:12).

22. Instruct the rich to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous (1 Tim 6:17–19).

23. Guard the Word of God as a sacred trust and a treasure (1 Tim 6:20–21).

Paul instructed Timothy in the second epistle that he must:

1. Keep the gift of God in him fresh and useful (2 Tim 1:6).

2. Not be timid but powerful (2 Tim 1:7).

3. Never be ashamed of Christ or anyone who serves Christ (2 Tim 1:8–11).

4. Hold tightly to the truth and guard it (2 Tim 1:12–14).

5. Be strong in character (2 Tim 2:1).

6. Be a teacher of apostolic truth so that he may reproduce himself in faithful men (2 Tim 2:2).

7. Suffer difficulty and persecution willingly while making the maximum effort for Christ (2 Tim 2:3–7).

8. Keep his eyes on Christ at all times (2 Tim 2:8–13).

9. Lead with authority (2 Tim 2:14).

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10. Interpret and apply Scripture accurately (2 Tim 2:15).

11. Avoid useless conversation that leads only to ungodliness (2 Tim 2:16).

12. Be an instrument of honor, set apart from sin and useful to the Lord (2 Tim 2:20–21).

13. Flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, and love (2 Tim 2:22).

14. Refuse to be drawn into philosophical and theological wrangling (2 Tim 2:23).

15. Not argue, but be kind, teachable, gentle, and patient even when wronged (2 Tim 2:24–26).

16. Face dangerous times with a deep knowledge of the Word of God (2 Tim 3:1–15).

17. Understand that Scripture is the basis and content of all legitimate ministry (2 Tim 3:16–17).

18. Preach the Word in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with great patience and instruction (2 Tim 4:1–2).

19. Be sober in all things (2 Tim 4:5).

20. Endure hardship (2 Tim 4:5).

21. Do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5).

In sum, Paul commanded Timothy to be:

1. Faithful in his preaching of biblical truth.

2. Bold in exposing and refuting error.

3. An example of godliness to the flock.

4. Diligent and work hard in the ministry.

5. Willing to suffer hardship and persecution in his service for the Lord.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 17: CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 4: Choosing Men Full Faith and the Holy Spirit

In this study, we examine one key passage in Acts 6 where the early church faced early ministry challenges. The church was serving food every day and the apostles were struggling to meet the needs of the church. Religious snubbing had already occurred, and there was a need for men to lead. We will study the kind of men chosen for leadership as the passage tells us much about the kind of leadership God wants in the church.

Bible passages for study:

Acts 5:1–11	Acts 6	Eph 5:10	Phil 2:14
Eph 5:18	Gal 5:16	Eph 4:30	1 Tim 4:7–10
Ps 119:98–100	Prov 3:13–24	Acts 7:1–60	Ps 119:11
Luke 23:34			

In the local church it is dangerous to the flock if men without dedication are chosen for ministry. The kind of men that the church needs would be dedicated to a routine and have a reputation of consistency. When selecting men, we are not looking for perfection. In fact, we want to elevate men who admit their weaknesses and have hearts that are pliable to the truth of God's Word. Their depth of conviction must be obvious, and their reputation as a churchman must be well known. Everyone will not be chosen for leadership, but every churchman should aspire to the same character qualities of the chosen elders and deacons.

1. Disciples of Christ were increasing in numbers, and a complaint arose (Acts 6:1–2, 7).

    a) The church was sharing resources and wisdom, and food was being served daily.

    b) There was a complaint that some were being overlooked.

    c) The twelve apostles were pulled into the controversy.

    d) Addressing the snub (v. 1) and serving needs were important, but these issues were taking the twelve away from the preaching and praying duties, which they were specifically gifted to lead.

2. It was decided to choose men (Acts 6:3).

    a) "From among you"—these were well-known men in the body.

    b) They are "full of the Spirit and of wisdom." Reputation was essential and well known.

    c) These men were not fringe guys; they were churchmen.

    d) Their tasks included:

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i) caring for the people's physical needs.

ii) handling administration and money concerns.

iii) planning the management of resources and strategic expansion as numbers increased.

iv) selecting other men to teach them to be useful to the Master.

3. The apostles were then freed from daily administrations in the church to serve the body with prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).

a) This was a clear separation of duties based on giftings.

b) Apostles preached, shared wisdom in counseling, and were powerful prayer warriors.

4. The early church listed the names of the men chosen for leadership (Acts 6:5).

a. These men were not chosen for the things that society reveres, such as:

i) business skills.

ii) speaking skills.

iii) administrative leadership or the ability to be strategic with logistics.

iv) their people leadership or management skills.

b) Stephen is listed first in prominence and is further described as:

i) a man full of faith

ii) a man full of the Holy Spirit

iii) a man full of grace (v. 8)

iv) a man full of power (v. 8)

c) Each of the men would have a measure of these, but Stephen is separated out at the first in this list (likely because later we will see more of Stephen's faith in Acts 7).

i) We should aspire to be the kind of man who comes to mind when our church considers these qualities:

(1) a reputation for being available and ready to meet needs

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(2) known to be sacrificial

(3) interested in being used by God to the max wherever they are gifted

ii) These are men whose testimony as authentic believers is not in question. They:

(1) don't serve to cover up other deficiencies.

(2) don't serve to placate a guilty conscience.

(3) have a sound testimony of conversion.

(4) have lives that bear the mark of the fruit of the Spirit.

(5) have a good reputation at home, at work, as husbands, fathers, and in the local body of believers.

d) Stephen and the other men had recently witnessed the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, and they did not leave the congregation after the Lord's discipline (Acts 5:1–11).

i) Fear came over the whole congregation.

ii) These were the kind of men who are not driven to run away in fear.

iii) Their fear likely fueled more sober living and reverence for God.

iv) They had a healthy fear of the Lord and a seriousness about life in the church.

5. The "whole congregation" approved of these men (Acts 6:5).

a) The whole congregation would not affirm men with a pattern of weakness.

b) Just as in 3 John 12, these men are those of whom the congregation would testify of their character.

6. Stephen was described as full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5; cf. Eph 5:18).

a) How did they know—and how would we know? A man filled with the Holy Spirit:

i) is pliable under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

ii) is soft to the truth.

iii) strives in the tough areas to be changed by the truth and to obey it (1 Tim 4:7–10).

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iv) investigates ways to obey and learns new ways every day to please the Lord (Eph 5:10).

v) is not marked by grumbling or disputing against God (Phil 2:14).

vi) walks by the Spirit (Gal 5:16).

vii) doesn't grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30).

b) A man full of faith:

i) likely doesn't know it himself! He is humble and uncommonly mature.

ii) is a man of wisdom (Acts 6:3). He knows how to be discerning in the application of truth.

iii) can be intimidating to other men.

– Instead of being intimidated negatively, we need to learn and grow by observing the example of intimidating men full of faith.

7. Stephen was full of grace and power, performing great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8). (Sign gifts pointed to the authenticity of Christ as the Messiah and to the gospel message of salvation by which both Jew and Gentile have access to the same Father by faith.)

a) The Jews "were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking" (Acts 6:10), so God ordained an act of dragging away and a trial in front of the Council (v. 12).

b) Stephen gave his defense, and we see what kind of man Stephen truly was (Acts 7:2–53).

i. He directly quotes twenty-five passages from the Old Testament.

ii. Stephen loved the truth, and he memorized large portions of it. In his defense, these passages were easily brought to mind and he used them in context and with correctness.

iii. All of us can learn Scripture through repetition and application. To one level or another, we remember things.

(1) No one with a mind renewed in God's Word by the power of the Holy Spirit cannot call to memory the passages that they have allowed to indict and correct their heart.

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(2) Where there is trench work in a man's life, it becomes familiar ground to recite and teach.

(3) We love Scripture more when we see the fruit that it produces in our lives.

– The fruit is Christlikeness.

– The fruit is for the most important things in life.

– Passages were embedded in Stephen's heart. Treasuring God's Word in our hearts causes us not to sin against Him (Ps 119:11).

8. Stephen showed us the ultimate result of his sanctification.

– Even in death Stephen is so full of faith and controlled by the Holy Spirit that he wants to follow Christ's example on the cross where He asked the Father to forgive those who crucified Him (Acts 7:60; cf. Luke 23:34).

As men are we aspiring to be like Stephen, a man full of faith and filled with the Holy Spirit?

1. Consider your public testimony. Would you be chosen from among the others in the church for your godly character and integrity?

2. Are we known by all as being sacrificial?

3. If we are missing from an event or a week at church, would those in the body find it strange or uncommon?

4. Are we on task?

– Different seasons bring change, but are we the kind of men who adapt to pressures and strive to be consistent despite the pressures?

– If we are not, we need to confess and take it to the Lord to grow our faith.

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 17: CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 5: What Is a Shepherd, Elder, and Overseer?

The Scriptures teach that soul care at the local church level, by servants who are gifted, called, and given by the Lord to shepherd His people, is God's primary means for preparing us to do every good work!

The shepherds of a local church, gifted and called to feed and lead that particular flock, are not to be viewed as:

– organizational managers (though they take overall responsibility for the flock's management of all kinds of logistics and details of a busy ministry)

– business executives (CEOs), building a company empire

– hirelings, under an agreed upon contract, who look out for themselves at the first sign of danger—the sheep are not commodities to be manipulated or marketed!

– given to the church as though it was their chosen vocation for material gain or earthly comfort.

A true shepherd is not:

– An untested novice, with no grasp of biblical theology, with no skill in handling the Word of God, without proven maturity in godly living, without increasing wisdom for dealing with the duties and dangers of soul-care

– Looking for personal significance, as though the church were his trophy

– Reckless, exposing the sheep to dangerous elements or predators

– Neglectful of the health of the flock, but will provide the best nourishment and protection for flourishing

Bible passages for study:

Ezek 34:11–12	Gen 48:15–16	John 10:11–16	Ps 32
Rev 7:17	Jer 13:15	Eph 4:7, 11–16	1 Tim 3:1–2
Acts 20:28	Matt 24:45	Acts 6:1–6	Titus 1:5–9
Acts 13:2-4	2 Cor 8:19	Acts 14:23	Titus 2
Col 3:2	Ps 23	Jer 3:15	Heb 13:7

Throughout Scripture, God's people are analogous to sheep and God is analogous to their Shepherd who intimately cares for His sheep. God likens Himself to a Shepherd when He's promising to care for His people. The analogy of a shepherd intimately knowing and caring for His sheep was woven into the fabric of Israel's theology, her music, and her way of life! In the New Covenant, the church

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is Jew and Gentile brought together into one body through the cross of Jesus Christ, who called Himself "the good shepherd." And we became part of His flock, never to be without a shepherd again. We hear and follow one voice, and for all eternity, we will still be called sheep who are led by our Chief Shepherd (Gen 48:15-16; Ps 23; Ezek 34:11–12; John 10:11–16; Rev 7:17).

The shepherd/sheep analogy would have no meaning if the New Covenant people of God had the freedom to decentralize spiritual care to an "Internet shepherd." The information superhighway may have good, even stellar, Bible teachers, but if they're not elders in your local fellowship or gifted and qualified under-shepherds appointed by the elders, then they are not your God-given shepherds—and you are not their sheep!

A shepherd knew his sheep; a shepherd fed his sheep, led his sheep out to pasture and back into the protected enclosure. A shepherd fought off the enemies of the sheep, and even chastened his sheep to keep them from running off and getting into trouble. He would secure the flock in safety and then scour the hillsides to find the lost sheep and bring it back. The shepherd sacrificed everything for the care of his sheep!

The Bible mentions shepherds and shepherding over 200 times. The New Testament mentions shepherds sixteen times. Dan Phillips said, "Sheep are helpless, vulnerable, willful, and stupid. The sentimental notion that God sees us as sheep because we're so sweet and lovable evidently came from someone who'd never worked with the little four-legged lawnmowers."[1]

The shepherd is always among his sheep, and the sheep are always intimately connected with their shepherd. But as with Israel's prophets, priests, and kings who "shepherded" God's people, so He has promised to always raise up and appoint under-shepherds who would feed and lead His people according to His will. They would be "shepherds after [His] own heart" (Jer 3:15). In larger fellowships, smaller groups form and sheep are placed in the care of under-shepherds.

In Ephesians 4:7 and continuing in verses 11–16, we find a passage that provides the "proof of the call" on a pastor and teacher.

1. God gave some as apostles who laid out the doctrinal foundation by giving them the authority to write it down for the New Covenant church (Eph 4:11).

> a) After apostles laid the foundation, then Christ gave evangelists to grow the numbers and to geographically expand the ministry.
>
> b) New assemblies appoint pastors and teachers.
>
> c) Pastors (shepherds) and teachers are a gift to the church.

2. Christ has gifted and given "pastors and teachers" to local assemblies (Eph 4:11).

[1] http://bibchr.blogspot.com/2006/01/why-god-calls-us-sheep.html

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MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 17: CHURCH LEADERSHIP
Study 5: What Is a Shepherd, Elder, and Overseer?

God never intended that a man simply declare himself to be a teacher of others or install himself as shepherd over people without being affirmed regarding the Spirit's evident "giftedness" for feeding and leading the flock.

a) When a man is "called" to shepherd the flock (he "aspires to the office of overseer," 1 Tim 3:1), there is the divine side (Acts 20:28).

b) There's also the man's call, character, and gifting being observed and affirmed by proven leaders and the congregation (1 Tim 3; Titus 1).

i) God's people (the sheep) consider the evidence of the Spirit first-hand, and all affirm it.

ii) The congregation nominates elders.

(1) He must be the kind of man who demonstrates teaching and shepherding gifts.

(2) He has a pattern of coming along other men to pour into their lives.

(3) He has a desire to see God's people grow.

(4) He works hard on his doctrine and skill in handling God's Word (Titus 1:9).

iii) There is an official, visible affirmation, leading to a great accountability.

(1) The "ordination" occurred in front of the local assembly so that all would know of the proven gifting, call, training, and character of the shepherd being sent to care for a local flock.

(2) Titus was ordained, and it was visibly illustrated with "laying on of hands," from the word for "appointment" (2 Cor 8:19).

(3) This concept goes all the way back to the Old Testament patriarchs. "Ordination" was simply a formal, often ceremonial way of affirming the person's readiness for the task at hand.

(4) Their "appointment" was tested by measuring them against whatever standard of requirements qualified them for the appointed role.

(5) In the New Testament, the concept didn't essentially change. The idea is something like "setting in place" or "designating."

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– The steward in Jesus' parable was "ordained" to oversee a household (Matt 24:45).

– The church was called to examine the character and fitness of the men who would take care of ministry finances and logistics (Acts 6:1–6).

– Paul told Titus to "appoint" [ordain] elders in every city" (Titus 1:5; cf. Acts 13:2–4; 14:23).

3. God tells us explicitly the purpose of this church structure in Ephesians 4:12–14.

a) The body is built up by the equipping of the saints.

b) There is no missing link in the chain.

c) There is unity of doctrine.

d) There is genuine fruit.

e) The body is growing more mature (i.e., Christlike).

f) Without this focus, sheep can lose their way.

g) Everything in our lives serves our growth or cuts off our growth.

h) The result of all this equipping is that we are no longer children or immature (Eph 4:14).

4. Ephesians 4:14–16 gives us warnings and tells us how the Lord is fitting the church together.

a) We are not to be tossed and carried about (v. 14). We should have the winds of God in our sails.

b) The danger is from subtle deception from "hidden reefs" (Jude 12).

– the trickery of men

– crafty deception

– deceitful scheming

– dumbed-down moral mandates

c) A good ministry is spying out error and does not endure it; it points it out. A good ministry is always discerning about what is being taught.

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i) Why? Because Christ is speaking truth in His church (v. 15).

ii) The church will not grow in love if error is permitted.

5. The flock is commanded to come under the elders and model their lives (Heb 13:7).

a) We are independent people, and as sheep this kind of model is foreign to our natural bent.

b) We must observe:

i) how they lead.

ii) their specific teaching.

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APPENDIX 1
NAVIGATING THE GRAY AREAS OF LIFE

Christians face a host of decisions every day that challenge even the most discerning believers. The Bible is very clear on matters such as lying, stealing, coveting, murder, adultery, immorality and many other behaviors explicitly called sin. But what about all those daily decisions that fall in between the "black and white" of Scripture? We usually refer to these as the "gray areas" of life, or issues which are matters of Christian freedom.

How do we make wholesome, wise, and Christ-honoring decisions when the Bible seems less definitive, giving us freedom of conscience in some areas? It is not enough simply to ask, "What's wrong with it?" or to reason "I haven't found a Bible verse prohibiting it; therefore, it's okay." The following is a brief list of helpful questions which promote honest reflection and compel us to think biblically and critically about not only each decision but also the motives behind them.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. John MacArthur for the basic framework and substance of these principles. I learned them early on from his preaching and writing ministries, and I offer them here with adaptations from my own application of his insights.[1]

Regarding each decision ask:

Will It Be a Spiritual Advantage to My Life?

In other words, will I be enhancing my growth by doing this or that? Will it cultivate more strength, endurance, discipline, and discernment? Will it build, rather than tear down, my life? Sleep may be a good thing, but too much of it will not be profitable. There's nothing wrong with recreation and leisure time, but without careful parameters one could be spiritually weakened (1 Cor 6:12–20; 10:23–31).

Will It Slow Me Down with Excess Baggage in the Christian Race?

We are called to live our Christian lives by faith. There are certain activities or behaviors which may not be wrong but could become excess distraction and temptation for some. Living a faithful life for the Lord requires diligence, perseverance, struggle, and focus. We should avoid behaviors and activities that add bulk to an already challenging set of spiritual priorities (Heb 12:1–3; 1 Cor 9:24–27).

Will It Potentially Enslave Me?

According to God's Word we must not allow anything to "master" us (1 Cor 6:12). Whatever your decision about a gray area of life, you must stay away from that thing which will bring you under its power. Because of sinful desires which are *at war* with God's Spirit within us (Jas 4:1), we can easily underestimate the enticement of everyday experiences. Many people have quickly come under the bondage of entertainment, media, food, money, romance, and a host of other enjoyments God has richly given to us. We often rationalize by conveniently overestimating our spiritual ability to say no—as in the case of Demas, who "loved this present world" (2 Tim 4:10).

[1] Dr. MacArthur's original message containing these basic principles is entitled "Making the Hard Decisions Easy," located at http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/80-24.htm.

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APPENDIX 1
NAVIGATING THE GRAY AREAS OF LIFE

Will It Hypocritically Cover My Sinful Desires?

In other words, am I doing it "in the name of" true biblical freedom when the truth of the matter is I'm really satisfying sinful desires? We must be honest with ourselves. We cannot put a veil over our sinful motives while pretending to be truly "free in Christ" (cf. 1 Pet 2:16). It is very common to turn liberty into license (Gal 5:13). If you spend a good bit of time defending your "privilege" to exercise a Christian liberty, perhaps you ought to let go of it for a time as a means of testing your motives. Is it truly a "freedom"? If so, it should be easily dispensed with for the sake of maintaining integrity before the Lord.

Will It Violate Christ's Supreme Rule in My Life?

Every believer should be submitting every day to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. However, not everyone agrees on just what the Lord wants. Some are convinced in their conscience that something is wrong, while others have a freedom of conscience to do that same thing. We must ask ourselves, "For me personally, is this something the Lord would be pleased with?" If we have any doubts we should not do it (Rom 14:20–23). If you believe that the Lord's will for your life would not be violated, then you're free to proceed (Rom 14:5). But be careful here: Paul warns us to be *completely* free from doubts. In other words, we should not be involved in some gray area without having sought counsel, studied God's Word, prayed, and scrutinized all possible pros and cons before proceeding. If important issues are bypassed and the conscience is violated, the result is sin (Rom 14:23).

Will It Impair My Judgment or Hinder the Holy Spirit's Control of My Will?

We are taught by Scripture that we must yield our will to the complete direction of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:6–14; Gal 5:16–25; Eph 5:18). Any activity that may diminish our ability to remain alert and sensitive to the things of God should not be taken lightly. This principle can have broad and specific application for the Christian. For example, unregulated relationships with unbelievers can cloud one's judgment, plant seeds of confusion about the truth, and desensitize us to the Spirit's conviction (1 Cor 15:33–34). Consider also the very real dangers associated with chemical substances (e.g., pain medication, alcohol, tobacco, etc.), which may lower inhibitions and skew our moral compass. We must be careful to avoid, wherever possible, all potential hindrances to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Will It Build Up Other Christians by Its Example?

We must never exercise a Christian freedom at the expense of another's faith. What you do in front of others is not simply a matter of your freedom in Christ to live as you choose, but rather an issue of building up other believers in their spiritual maturity. We must be careful not to unwittingly encourage others toward a behavior that may violate their conscience, thereby putting "a stumbling block in a brother's way" (Rom 14:13). The pattern of our lives sets an example, and it is a tremendous encouragement to carefully limit our liberty out of love so as to never hurt a brother or sister in the Lord (Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 10:23–33).

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APPENDIX 1
NAVIGATING THE GRAY AREAS OF LIFE

Will It Lead Others Toward Christ?

This is a very difficult issue. The Bible teaches that we should never to get into a situation where our innocent behavior is "spoken of as evil" (Rom 14:16). For example, if what we are doing—though not sinful, could misrepresent the Lord, His church, His people, or His truth to the world—then we should avoid it. Not only should we build up less mature believers in the body, but also we should have character that is above legitimate question in the eyes of unbelievers (1 Pet 2:12–24; 3:13–17; 4:15). Some things are not evil but can easily be associated with questionable elements of society or even worldliness. Remember, if Christian freedoms are truly freedoms then we should be just as ready and willing to give them up as to enjoy them.

Will It Be Consistent with Christlike Character?

We want to imitate Jesus Christ in all our desires, words, thoughts, and deeds. If we say we belong to Christ, then our first consideration when deciding whether to do this or that should be what the Scriptures teach about our Lord's attitude toward His heavenly Father, toward obedience, toward people, and toward the truth. Is this consistent with who He is, His likeness? Could this bring His name and the gospel into question? Will others see what I'm doing and question my commitment to follow Him (1 John 1:6; 2:6)?

Will It Magnify the Glory of God?

We should live in such a way that the Word of God is honored (Titus 2:5) and God's glory is on display (1 Cor 10:31). We must ask if the activity or behavior could undermine God's name. Could God's honor and praise be diminished as a result of this? Some things may seem mundane and rather non-spiritual (e.g., eating, working with hobbies, leisure, etc.), but Christians must always be alert as to how God can be gratefully praised for all He has provided. We must avoid anything that could detract from bringing Him thankful praise for everything we have the freedom to enjoy.

A Word About Unity in the Body of Christ

Beyond these questions, believers have the liberty to make decisions in those areas where the Scriptures give no clear direction for what is sin. Anyone who is less free in their conscience is warned not to judge others who are free, but rather be thankful for God's leading in their life (Rom 14:3b–4). This is very difficult for the "less free" to balance. What their conscience perceives as sinful easily becomes a universal standard for everyone because their conscience is strongly affirmed by strict avoidance of such activities. Consequently, they will feel less fearful and more comfortable when others adhere to the same conduct. However, each believer whose conscience is not as "free" as others must first acknowledge their internal boundaries and be honest about the tendency to judge others without biblical warrant (Rom 14:3b–13a). They should confess the sin of judging and seek the forgiveness of those whom they have offended. Second, they should thank God for their present state of maturity and for using the conscience to protect them from potential dangers unforeseen. Third, they must press on to maturity in the Scriptures by studying each issue so as to properly inform their conscience along clear, biblical lines. Finally, they should be patient as the Lord works in their hearts to cultivate discernment and balance, never violating their spiritual sensibilities in the meantime.

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APPENDIX 1
NAVIGATING THE GRAY AREAS OF LIFE

Regarding those with greater liberty, Romans 14:13b–21; 15:1 equally warns them not to think less of others without freedom, but rather to love them—first by never being an offense or spiritual hindrance. Wherever a complaint arises, careful and thoughtful interaction should follow so that an understanding is reached for God's glory. The conscience of one should not rule another in areas of liberty, but love should prevail in every consideration, even if it means eliminating the exercise of certain liberties (e.g., Paul in 1 Cor 8:12–13). Second, serious consideration should be given to whether a liberty is the best choice in a particular context. Some Christian freedoms may be unquestioned because of cultural "norms" or common Christian practice, while the freedom in other contexts may be imprudent because of the spiritual background and history of certain groups and peoples. For example, where the mealtime consumption of wine is the norm, one's liberty—all other spiritual questions above having been considered—will most likely be a non-issue. On the other hand, in a culture where the abuses of alcohol are decried by both the saved and the unsaved, such liberty may cause greater questions and bring an unintended but very real reproach upon Christ and His church. Finally, those with greater liberty of conscience should carefully discern the difference between a *clear* conscience and a *seared* one. Some participate in gray areas with ease because they have consistently and with cavalier involvement suppressed the warnings of their conscience. This is often rationalized by appealing to the absence of an explicit text prohibiting the practice. How can we know the difference? According to 1 Timothy 1:5–7, when the conscience is silenced, the result is "fruitless discussion" (vain and senseless talk), pride, and arrogant but ignorant assertions about truth (cf. 1 Tim 4:2–3). In other words, the more someone engages in activities which their conscience warns them against, the more they become blinded to the truth, cannot see the dangers, and therefore, perceive themselves to be "free" though they are deceived. Conversely, the evidence of a clear and maturing conscience is simply humility, submissiveness, and obedience (1 Pet 2:16–19; 3:16–17). Where these are absent, it is a given: one's conscience may feel free but is simply suppressed. In conclusion, Paul spoke of each of these realities within the church and we should not be surprised at the struggle. Remember, we shall all give an account of ourselves before God (Rom 14:10)!

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APPENDIX 2
THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN INTERPRETATION
(by Brian Shealy)

The role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation is something that is often mentioned in hermeneutics and exegesis books, but little discussion is devoted to explaining what that role is, where the Bible teaches it, and how we know when it occurs. It is the contention of this writer that the Spirit has a multifaceted role in the life of the believer as he interprets Scripture.

The Spirit's work in the interpreter is necessary because of the depravity of man. Due to the effects of sin, a natural man, the unbeliever, "does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1 Cor 2:14). This means that the unbeliever does not see the Word of God as wisdom, but rather as foolishness. Therefore, he rejects it. While he does have a level of cognitive awareness of the signification of the words, He cannot understand in the sense of experientially knowing it as truth in a relationship with God. This is due to the fact that it is spiritually discerned. The unbeliever is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1) and consequently, has a futile, darkened, ignorant mind and a hard heart that makes him callous to spiritual things (Eph 4:17–19). He is hostile to God and cannot bring himself under the Scriptures as his authority (Rom 8:7–8).

Therefore, the Spirit's initial work involves turning a person into one who has many of the necessary presuppositions to begin to interpret the Scriptures. The Bible speaks of these changes in terms of the person being "born again" (John 3:3), "born of the Spirit" (John 3:5–6), and saved by the "washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). When the Word is preached, the Spirit attends His Word and some receive it with joy as the Word of God (1 Thess 1:5–6; 2:13). This is because their spiritual eyes, which were blind (Matt 13:15; Rom 11:8), are enabled to see (Matt 13:16). These facets of the changes of salvation give the person a new world-and-life view. They will then have the necessary preunderstanding concerning beliefs about God and His Word for interpreting the Word.

At conversion the Spirit also takes up residence in the life of the believer (Rom 8:11). Now he lives, and has the capacity to walk, be led, and filled by the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 18, 25; Eph 5:18). He has the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9) and thus, the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). As the believer is conformed to the image of Christ through sanctification by the Spirit, he is given the proper thinking to have a whole-hearted understanding and embracing of the Word as truth and gets to understand and know God better. His eyes are enlightened to know the truth more deeply (Eph 1:18).

This indwelling Spirit is the same Spirit of truth, who was promised by Jesus to teach His disciples all things, bring to their remembrance all that He had said, to guide them into all truth, and to declare the things to come (John 14:17, 26; 16:13). It is difficult to determine how much of the Spirit's work in their lives from these promises was limited to them and what aspects are normative for believers of all times. John himself includes some examples of how the apostles remembered what Jesus had said and understood the significance after His resurrection (John 2:19–22; 12:16; cf. 20:9). One can certainly see how this perfect memory would be important for writing the Gospels. His teaching them and guiding them into all truth could certainly explain the epistles. Further, declaring the things to come explains the nature of revelation. So, perhaps this is a promise for the apostles' ministry and the process of "inscripturation."

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Yet, when the same writer, John, later addresses a church in 1 John 2:20, 27, he tells them that they have received an anointing from the Holy One, and as a result they know all things and they do not need to be taught. It would contradict the very letter John is writing if these were absolute unqualified statements. The context would rather indicate that they know the truth about Jesus well enough to not be led astray by those who deny Him. If the anointing here is the Spirit, which is a reasonable conclusion, then believers are presumed to be taught the truth by Him and therefore know the truth, understand it well enough to believe it, and understand the significance of it so that they can obey it. So, the teaching ministry of the Spirit seems to be normative in relation to the truth already revealed.

Another passage that bears on this issue is 1 Corinthians 2:6–16. There Paul speaks about revelation that has been made known to "us," which they make known. It is possible again that this is intended to refer to the unique role that the Spirit had in revealing the mystery of the gospel to Paul and other recipients of direct revelation. However, there are some universal truths if one reasons through Paul's words. The very wisdom they received is imparted to others (1 Cor 2:6); it was prepared for those who love God (2:9); the Spirit knows the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10–11); the Spirit was received by them and He enabled them to understand the things given (1 Cor 2:12). So the things given are revelation of truth, but the understanding of that truth is distinct from the revelation of it. Therefore, there is the revelatory role of the Spirit in Paul's life, but believers who have received this same Spirit should also be able to expect that by the Spirit they too would understand the Word. Again, the Spirit teaches and gives spiritual discernment (1 Cor 2:16). Second Timothy 2:7 coheres with these ideas since while Paul instructs Timothy, he is confident that the Lord will give him understanding of his instruction.

In summary, the Scriptures lead one to conclude that the Spirit who inspired Scripture regenerates a person and enables him to have a spiritual appraisal of the Word, which he embraces as truth. This internal recognition of the Word as truth is sometimes referred to as the internal testimony. As a person grows and is sanctified by the Spirit, as He uses the Word, the Spirit guides him to understand and apply truth. While the believer is not promised infallible interpretive abilities, the Spirit does work in his life to have the capacity for the proper presuppositions needed to rightly interpret, embrace, understand, and apply Scripture.

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APPENDIX 3
HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

Text: (Translation)

Insert entire passage here. It is helpful to copy and paste the Bible passage from a website such as www.biblegateway.com. It is advisable to record the verse numbers within the passages. For example, here is a copy/paste from Bible Gateway on 1 Thessalonians 5:

16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit;

Hermeneutical Analysis

1. How does this passage fit into the author's flow of thought?

2. What (unique) contribution does the passage make to the flow of thought?

3. Why did the author include this passage at this point in the book?

4. What is the main purpose of the passage in its original context?

5. Why is the purpose (determined in point 4) significant for that audience?

6. How do the significant truths revealed in this passage impact my life? Have I identified implications and how I will apply these truths to my heart, mind, will, and reasoning?

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APPENDIX 4
UNGODLY DATING RELATIONSHIPS: HOW TO AVOID GETTING STUNG

Dating. The very word can evoke strong feelings, both good and bad. Many books in recent years have tried to clear up some of the confusion, but they've often raised additional questions that further cloud the issue. The principles outlined in this brief essay are not designed to critique the various views on dating. In fact, it's not really a discussion of dating at all. Rather, the purpose is to get specific about how relationships quickly get into trouble, and to articulate principles that help the people of God avoid the perils of an ungodly relationship.

Is emotional attachment simply spending too much time together? Not at all. In fact, spending an increasing amount of time together is a normal part of even a God-honoring relationship. However, time can be an enemy if two immature people spend it selfishly using and consuming the relationship rather than serving it.

Most young people begin a relationship quite normally. They are initially attracted to each other (God has designed this as a good thing), and they desire to "get to know" one another. Here's where the problem begins. Typically, they become instantly focused on superficial dynamics of the initial attraction. What are some warnings signs to watch for?

1. They want the constant pleasure of looking at the attractiveness of the other, so being together for hours and hours seems good.

2. They like being noticed by others when they're with this new friend because it makes them look good to be with someone so attractive and well-liked.

3. They feed the shallow infatuation by saying things to each other that will invoke more fleshly desire (e.g., "I miss being with you"; "I've never been with anyone like you"; "Do you miss me?", etc.).

4. They experiment with physical touching of various kinds (holding hands, lingering embraces, kissing)—not because the relationship has enough depth of commitment to have earned such displays of affection—but because their hearts are filled with lusts to feel the rewards of marital romance before vows are exchanged. Stated more bluntly, young people want now what God has designed for marriage alone. Even "good Christian kids" who manage to avoid blatant sexual activity, will often engage in lesser forms of the same lust of the heart, which always bring immediate trouble into the relationship.

5. Continuing to build on the above superficial habits, they constantly rationalize more and more time together at the expense of all other important relationships (family, friends, church mentors, ministry needs, etc.). In other words, all important ministry time normally devoted to family and the body of Christ gets swallowed up by hours of idle "hanging out" with this new interest. If the student is in high school or college (though junior high students are not immune), these spans of time together begin to invade each individual's "personal" time and space. This may be long hours late into the evening, either at each other's home or simply through electronic media. This is a subtle form of "playing house," as though they have the privileges of 24/7 companionship without having to earn it by proven character and marital commitment.

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6. Last, they begin to use phrases like "I love you" and "You mean so much to me" because they have deceived themselves into thinking the relationship is healthy, normal, and potentially ready for the next step toward marriage. This is a huge miscalculation! Especially during the high school years, but quite often in college as well, young people overestimate their spiritual maturity and resist the godly counsel of more mature believers (parents, older godly couples, youth pastors, etc.). No relationship is truly mature without each individual having first extensively proven a level of spiritual depth and maturity in their own walk with Christ. I'm not talking about consistent quiet times (even pre-teens can be disciplined here) or involvement in the church youth group. I'm talking about a well-known, proven moral godliness, the fruits of which are humility, sacrifice, purity, submission to authority, self-control, and separation from worldliness. Most early relationships don't even think about these virtues, let alone look for a measure of consistency in them. Consequently, when two young people spend time together, they do not have the proven maturity to build a strong foundation for long-term godliness in one another.

At this point, the relationship is nothing more than two people selfishly feeding personal desires for companionship and romance, and focusing exclusively on elements of a relationship that, while a normal part of God's design, cannot provide any substantial foundation for building a truly committed union that honors Christ. There's nothing sinful about being attracted to someone and feeling initial excitement and anticipation. But if—very shortly after these initial interests—the two young people neglect the discipline and self-control required to strengthen and deepen the relationship, the result will be a superficial emotional attachment that is rooted in lust and selfishness. It may feel good; it may seem harmless because of the good intentions of two Christian students; it may start out with involvement in Bible studies, prayer, and church attendance, but without a growing Christlike character, the relationship will quickly deteriorate. How can young people avoid these ungodly habits?

1. Let parents and mentors know early on of your interest in someone, and ask them to help evaluate the potential.

2. Watch the person's life from a distance for about two to three months before going any further. This will help you remain objective and avoid being blinded by emotional infatuation. It will be especially challenging at this stage to hold off making your interests known to the person for fear of missing the opportunity. Trust the Lord! If He is leading you, you'll never miss out on anything that will bless your life.

3. Know the biblical character qualities to look for and be honest about any glaring weaknesses observed.

4. Listen carefully to the wisdom and experience of those whom God has placed over you. You may think your happiness depends on being with the one you like, but those who know what it takes to enjoy a godly relationship are your best protection against such immature thinking.

5. Acknowledge ungodly tendencies and areas of vulnerability. If you struggle with being flirtatious and shallow, wanting to be liked more than desiring holiness, or resisting authority (particularly

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Scripture), openly confess these weaknesses to those who care about you and strive to build new habits and biblical thinking.

6. Don't pursue the relationship without affirmation from those who know you best, and never excuse a violation of the clear principles of Scripture under the guise of "true love and affection."

7. If the Lord affirms your readiness, pursue the person with clearly-stated intentions and integrity.

8. Always protect their reputation and the name of Christ.

9. Never allow time together to cause confusion or questions about motives. What you do and when you do it should never create doubts about each other's integrity, singular devotion to Christ, or sincerest care for one another's reputation and purity.

10. Never neglect other spiritual responsibilities within the family or body of Christ in order to spend time with the person.

11. Stay away from tempting environments—late nights alone, idle and unproductive "hanging out," being in one another's personal space (bedrooms, dorms, etc.), unhelpful entertainment (movies with romantic themes, love songs, etc.), staying in contact through computer and phones all hours of the day and night.

12. Avoid physical expressions of affection until a time when future commitments have been seriously contemplated, and never do anything that you wouldn't openly do in front of godly parents or the body of Christ. Ask parents and mentors how to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Tim 4:7).

13. Resist the superficial counsel and encouragement from friends who offer opinions rather than biblical support. Sentimental prodding from relationship-novices is never helpful. Listen carefully to those who know what it takes to build a lifetime of blessing and fulfillment in marriage.

14. Avoid feeding emotional desires with flattering conversation.

15. Trust only the Lord to knit your heart together with another person. If the Lord is in it, you'll have the affirmation of godly parents and biblically-grounded friends around you.

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