**RECEIVE**

Decisions that Encourage Discipleship

Choosing to intentionally grow into Christlikeness.

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” Hosea 4:6*

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**Unit 101 Choosing to leave the place where Jesus finds me.**

*(Luke 9:23a) “if anyone will come after me…”*

Class 101-1: Deciding to Believe/ Trust…Class 101-2: Deciding to Hear/ Pray… Class 101-3: Deciding to Risk/ Receive…Class 101-4: Deciding to Continue, & Listen & Wait… and tonight……………………………:

**My Salvation Story**

**\*\*I am spending a lot of time on our early days of walking with the Lord because it is so important when we build a building to carefully lay the foundation—and let the cement dry before we start putting a structure on top.**

Each of these previous four lessons as well as the one more to come are all just the beginnings of our life in these areas. We believe—but Lord helps our unbelief!!! We trust, but we have greater confidence as we continue to trust and commit. Risk is always a part of walking with our God who is never fully comprehended by us. A life of receiving is the life-support we need to be alive in Christ, much like a deep sea diver who needs to stay attached to the oxygen line from above! The test to give up and not continue comes throughout our life in Christ—and usually when we least expect it. The helplessness of listening and waiting challenges our desire to be in control and to know what is happening now and what is ahead.

The concept of evaluating and sharing is not always a part of the decision to be a follower of Jesus today—whether it is just raising a hand in a church service, or even with a private presentation of the gospel with a friend. **In the old days** (I am not saying everything we used to do was perfect), a person often came to Christ during a public altar call. And even more important, they usually were encouraged afterwards to give their testimony of what Christ had done for them during the praise time. **The Old Timers** (I am not referring to myself—or even my father… but those that came before him) used to call it “nailing down the tent.” If you have ever been on the beach with a tent when the wind came up, you know what it is to chase the tent as it rolls across the beach! Evaluating and sharing is a way to make the decision and the new life more permanent. When we speak with our mouth to others it helps solidify things, so it is not so easy to second guess what happened—to rationalize and dilute the decision we have made. Sharing is also invaluable to help the body of Christ pray for the spiritual progress that has been made.

**My Salvation Story**

As a part of the mailing and additional material, you have a story of my conversion as a high school student. I do not intend to repeat all of that here, but I do want you to know that I consider that event in my life to be transformative for me. One of the best parts was what I described above, that after so many had also come to the altar for spiritual help that day, we had a time of praise and testimony of what God had done in our lives—and that went on for more than an hour—and that was after the 31 verses of “Just as I am!” It is one of the reasons that I not only have encouraged sharing at times of victory at the altar in my ministry, but also at a time of baptism, and in Sunday night and Wednesday night services.

I do not believe that everyone needs a “crisis” experience as I received, but I do think that many do. My perspective is that the greater the rebellion in a person’s life, the greater the crisis will likely be! What is critical is that we become “new creatures”, where old things have passed away and all things have become new (II Corinthians 5:17.) If there has not been much of a rebellious life, the change may not be as noticeable as it is in others who repent (do a complete “U-Turn”). But it is noticeable to that person as Christ makes Himself known to them.

**101-5 Deciding to Evaluate and Share**

**John 10:14-15 *“I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.***

\*\*The way the Father knows Jesus—the Son.

Think of how intimate the Father knows Jesus, and the Son knows the Father. It is God’s plan that this same intimacy be between our life and Jesus. His plan is not for just a one hour service once a week, or a brief time of prayer each day, but for us to pray without ceasing—a constant awareness of Him, and listening for Him!

\*\*The way that we know the Shepherd—Jesus.

This is not easy to do as creatures of time and space. We have many things that seem to demand our attention and energy. But it is important to involve God in those things—and not compartmentalize them as something apart from Him.

\*\*The way that we are connected to the Godhead, three in one!

…Jesus, the Son of God is Divine and Human

…The Scriptures are Divine and Human

…Believers are Divine and Human

**Examining Yourself**

**I Corinthians 10:27-32 *“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a person must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not properly recognize the body. For this reason, many among you are weak and sick, and a number are asleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.”***

\*\* To assume you are one with the Lord is a dangerous choice.

It is also dangerous to assume you are one with the Lord because a church says you are, or a Christian friend or leader says you are. Examination is necessary.

\*\* The Lord’s Supper is “communion” with the Father, the Son, the Spirit.

Unfortunately, too often communion has become just a ritual that we go through without thinking and without listening to the voice of the Lord. It should be a time of praise to God for His sacrifice, and a realization of continued unworthiness.

\*\* It is necessary to eat the Lord’s body, to drink His blood (John 6:52-58)

The very nature of the bread and the wine is an example of taking Christ into our body and into our world, consuming Him and letting His power and life be present.

\*\* The possibility of “eating judgment to himself” if done unworthily.

The previous illustration shows the non-sequitur. Christ cannot come into the life that is practicing sin and intending to continue that practice.

\*\* The Lord’s judgment now is so that we will not be condemned later!

The above sentence shows what I believe is the Spirit’s intention to convict and help the follower of Christ make adjustments that will be pleasing to the Master.

\*\* Not only spiritual weakness, but physical weakness as well may accrue.

This kind of inner conflict can be more than psychological trauma. It can bring the effects of stress into the physical body, and surely diminish God’s spirit in the soul.

**Psalm 19:12-14 *“Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.  
Also keep Your servant back from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me;  
then I will be innocent, and I will be blameless of great wrongdoing. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,  
Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.”***

\*\* It is a mistake to not seek God’s revealing to us of any wrongdoings.

\*\* It is even a greater mistake to assume and presume God’s view of me.

\*\* It is a constant prayer of a growing Christians to be right in God’s sight.

\*\* The Lord is our rock and our redeemer, not our own understanding.

**Some of the greatest testimonies are from new, imperfect Christians who in honesty and sincerity share their story of what Christ has done for them.**

**Some of the most harmful testimonies are from persons who mistakenly think that they are a “new creature in Christ” but are obviously seen as false by the world!**

**Deciding to Share**

**Acts 1:6-8 *“So, when they had come together, they began asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ But He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know periods of time or appointed times which the Father has set by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and in the remotest part of the earth.”***

\*\* It is God’s goal for us that we witness for Him all over the world.

\*\* His power and presence in us leads and empowers us to do that.

\*\* It is not for us to know the times or seasons but to use what time we have.

\*\* The absolute essential is the power of the Holy Spirit coming on us!

Too many Christians have tried to be witnesses before they had received the power of God. Also, too many Christians have received the power of God though the Spirit but have used it only for themselves to enjoy His Presence—overlooking the times when they could have been effective as a witness for Him. This verse is not just for the clergy, but it is for all believers today!

**John 1:44-46 *“Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets also wrote: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth!’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good be from Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.”***

…come and see is the best witness a new Christian can give to their friends!

You don’t have to be an authority on Scripture to be an effective witness. You can tell your story—and you are an authority on that! You were there, you know what happened and you can ask them “to taste and see that the Lord is good.”

…sometimes preconceptions hinder our witness of what Jesus can do!

Just as Nathaniel didn’t think anything good could come out of Nazareth, you and I sometimes have a hard time thinking that a person we know could want to hear about Jesus. And their conceptions about Jesus may create a difficulty in them believing your story or considering taking a step of faith toward Christ.

**When was the last time you shared Christ with someone? What happened?**

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HAVE YOU INVITED THE SPIRIT OF GOD INTO YOUR LIFE?

**GO FOLLOW JESUS THIS WEEK!!!**